



**Survival Factors Attachment:
Emergency Responder Interviews**

Crozet, Va.

HWY18MH005

(147 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

COLLISION OF AMTRAK SPECIAL TRAIN *

P0923 31 AT THE HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE * Accident No.: HWY18MH005

CROSSING AT LANETOWN ROAD IN *

CROZET, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 2018 *

* * * * *

Interview of: OFFICER WILLIAM UNDERWOOD

Albemarle County Police Department
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, Virginia

Thursday,
February 1, 2018

APPEARANCES:

SHERYL HARLEY, Highway Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:59 a.m.)

1
2
3 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right today is February the 1st of
4 2018. It's now 9:59 a.m. This is the recorded interview of
5 Officer William Underwood, and you are of the Albemarle County
6 Police Department?

7 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yes.

8 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right. So, my name is Sheryl Harley.
9 I'm with the NTSB. And what I am investigating here is what we
10 call survival factors. Survival factors is very simply we look at
11 the response of the first responders. We ask you what you saw.
12 We ask you to tell us about the scene, if you encountered any
13 difficulties, if there's anything that you believe that could make
14 it easier for you to do your job.

15 One of the things that we're looking at is how to make it
16 better, how to make it so that this is more survivable for the
17 people who were involved or find a way of mitigating the severity
18 of some of the injuries.

INTERVIEW OF OFFICER WILLIAM UNDERWOOD

19
20 BY MS. HARLEY:

21 Q. So I guess what I want you to do is, why don't you start from
22 when you received the call for this and approximately what time,
23 and just kind of walk me through it.

24 A. Okay. So it was probably right around 11 o'clock. I was
25 sitting at the fire station at Crozet Fire Department. And the

1 trash truck actually came through the parking lot of the fire
2 department, and they continued West on Jarmans Gap Road. I guess
3 it was probably about a minute after the trash truck left the
4 parking lot, I heard the train coming through town. I looked up
5 to see if it was a passenger or a cargo train and saw that it was
6 an Amtrak train.

7 Appeared to be going the normal speed the trains go whenever
8 they come through Crozet. I always work out in Crozet, so I see
9 the trains every day. Probably about a minute later the tone
10 started dropping for the accident. So I immediately responded,
11 and I was probably less than a minute away.

12 When I got on the scene, I saw -- I couldn't see the trash
13 truck because the rear engine of the train was blocking about
14 three-quarters of the crossover. So I advised dispatch that -- to
15 try to find out if the train could pull forward because they're
16 going to be blocking responders from getting there because that
17 would be the way most people would come in.

18 I got out, grabbed some first aid equipment, ran around the
19 engine and then I saw the trash truck. I saw a gentleman standing
20 on the driver's side of the trash truck. His face was all smashed
21 in and covered in blood. There was a lady standing with him that
22 identified herself as a nurse, and she said the other two were on
23 the other side of the truck.

24 I ran around the front of the truck, observed two males on
25 the ground. One was kind of all folded up on the ground and one

1 was laying on his back. The one that was all folded up appeared
2 to me to be obviously dead. I did a quick check of pulse and
3 respirations on him, and he was negative for both.

4 At that point I heard the second male on the ground, that was
5 laying on his back, choking. I observed that he had a large
6 amount of blood in his mouth and his nose and he was drowning in
7 his own blood. I went over there, did a finger sweep of his mouth
8 to clear out as much of the blood as I could. Got him turned over
9 on his side so that the blood would be draining, and it seemed to
10 improve his breathing. And then once medical got there, they put
11 him back on his back and I observed that his breathing started to
12 get a lot slower at that point in time.

13 Once medical was there, I turned over patient care to them.
14 We have reports that there was -- the front of the train was
15 derailed. There were possible injuries up there. So I jumped
16 back in my patrol car and paralleled the train on that farm road
17 that's adjacent to the tracks.

18 Got up to the front, asked if there were any injuries.
19 Capitol Police officers at the front of the train advised me that
20 the engineers were both banged up. Made contact with both the
21 engineers, did a quick triage of them. One of them had bit his
22 lip and was complaining of knee pain. I checked out his knee.
23 There was no obvious injury to his knee. He had a mark -- it
24 looked like somebody punched in the face.

25 Then the other engineer came up, and he had similar injuries.

1 He had -- looked like somebody punched him in the face. He did
2 not have any mouth injury, though, but he was complaining of me
3 pain also. And when I observed his knee, he actually had a
4 depression in his kneecap that was concerning, although not life
5 threatening, and I advised him that he needed to go get that
6 checked out. And I relayed to dispatch that I needed them to send
7 a rescue unit up the farm road to the front of the train for those
8 two.

9 At that point we started receiving reports of injuries on the
10 train. And then, while -- shortly after I received that report, I
11 received a report of a cardiac incident in car 5. I ran back to
12 my patrol car, grabbed my AED and then ran down to car 5 and
13 boarded the train.

14 Initially when we got on there we weren't able to locate a
15 patient complaining of any cardiac incident. So at that point,
16 myself and fire rescue and another police officer split up and we
17 kind of went different ways on the train to check everybody. So I
18 worked my way to the front of the train from car 5, checking on
19 everybody in all those cars.

20 As the day went on, more people decided that they were hurt
21 and so we had just kind of kept -- every time we went through we
22 found somebody else. And we just kind of kept doing initial
23 triage until rescue had people that could take over and decide
24 whether or not they were transporting or doing refusals.

25 Q. Okay. So let me back you up a little bit. So you arrived on

1 the scene in about a minute or so.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. How long did it take the fire department to arrive?

4 A. They were -- they had a crew in-house when I was in their
5 parking lot. So for them to get on the truck and then get down
6 the road behind me, probably 5 minutes.

7 Q. Okay. So you arrived on the scene first and the crossing was
8 actually blocked by the rear, rear --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- is that a locomotive on the rear?

11 A. It was the rear locomotive on the rear.

12 Q. It was a rear locomotive?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. And the train crew actually moved the train up a
15 little bit?

16 A. No, they couldn't.

17 Q. They couldn't?

18 A. It was derailed.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So they couldn't move it.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So we had to deal with that access issue anyway.

23 Q. Okay. So at that --

24 A. And the crossbars were down as well.

25 Q. Oh. So you saw the crossbars were down?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Was there any damage to the crossbars?

3 A. Not that I recall seeing.

4 Q. Okay. So you go around the train and at that particular
5 point you see the truck. There is a gentleman who is standing on
6 the driver's side --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- and with a young lady who has said she is a nurse.

9 A. Right.

10 Q. Did you get her name by any chance?

11 A. I did not.

12 Q. No? Okay.

13 A. I never saw her again.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. I couldn't -- if she walked in the room right now, I couldn't
16 tell you it was her.

17 Q. Do you know if she drove there or she -- or how she got
18 there?

19 A. No idea. I don't know whether she was on the train or
20 whether she was -- no idea.

21 Q. Okay. So you go over and there were two gentlemen. You have
22 your gentleman that you said was balled up and that was the one
23 that you believed was obviously dead, and you had a gentleman on
24 his back. Did you have some sense at that time or did you ever
25 come to get -- receive information as to how he got out of the

1 truck? Did he get out of the truck or was he thrown out of the
2 truck?

3 A. I was told by -- there were civilians that were at the
4 intersection that yelled that they had all been ejected.

5 Q. Okay. Okay.

6 A. Because when they came by me at the firehouse, at least one
7 of the guys, if not both of them, were hanging off the back of the
8 truck like they do on a trash truck. But it would only have made
9 sense, as cold as it was, once they told me they all got ejected
10 from the cab that they would have gotten back in the truck until
11 they got to that next neighborhood they were going to service.

12 Q. Okay. So there were some civilians on the scene who actually
13 saw them being ejected?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. They actually saw the crash.

17 Q. Okay. Were they ejected through a windshield or out the
18 door; do you know?

19 A. I think they were out the door. I think the windshield,
20 although damaged, was still intact, from what I remember.

21 Q. All right.

22 A. And the back glass was gone, so it could have been out the
23 back of the cab.

24 Q. Oh, okay.

25 A. Yeah, it was completely missing.

1 Q. Did you find the passenger door open?

2 A. I don't recall.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. The passenger door was not -- I'm sorry. The passenger was
5 not open.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. The driver's door, I don't recall whether it was open or
8 closed.

9 Q. Okay. And you said the whole back glass was gone?

10 A. Yes, out of the cab.

11 Q. Okay. Can you tell, looking at it, whether -- do you know if
12 it was broken out or it wasn't there or --

13 A. It looked like it was broken out as a result of the accident.

14 Q. Okay. All right.

15 A. Yeah, instead of being the almost perfect rectangle shape, I
16 mean, it was -- it was jacked up.

17 Q. Great. So at that particular point you turned over first aid
18 to the fire department?

19 A. Yeah. Well, Western Rescue Squad.

20 Q. I'm sorry, who?

21 A. Western Albemarle Rescue Squad.

22 Q. Western Albemarle.

23 A. And then there were a couple of doctors, a couple of the
24 congressmen from the train -- Flake, I think was one of them, and
25 another one, were working on him as well, with me.

1 Q. Okay. All right. So do you know where these gentlemen
2 actually went to? Let's start talking about the gentleman that
3 was obviously dead. What happens to -- do you -- does the medical
4 examiner come out to you or how does that work?

5 A. Sometimes.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So sometimes they give us verbal consent to move the body
8 over the phone and sometimes they come out to the scene. It all
9 depends on what the call was. I don't know what call they made in
10 this instance.

11 Q. Okay. Okay.

12 A. Like I say, once all the patient care stuff was done, then I
13 took over security of the train and the engine once the train left
14 -- or the locomotive. I was trying to think of that term all day
15 yesterday. I kept calling it the engine.

16 Q. Engine?

17 A. And you said it a few minutes ago and I was like, there's
18 that word.

19 Q. There's that word. I knew it was there somewhere.

20 So okay. And the gentleman that was seriously hurt, he was
21 transported where?

22 A. He was transported by ground ambulance to a landing zone and
23 then placed on Pegasus and flown to University of Virginia Medical
24 Center.

25 Q. Do you have any idea if he's still at UVA?

1 A. I don't know if he's still alive. The prognosis was not
2 good. When they got him on the bird, they did a skull structure
3 test and they said his skull was just mush.

4 Q. Okay. So explain to me how -- first of all, who is your
5 medical examiner or coroner here?

6 A. So our medical examiner is out of Richmond.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And it's a rotational. Like we don't have a medical examiner
9 assigned to Albemarle County or Charlottesville.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Everything goes to Richmond.

12 Q. Do you have a local county coroner or just you just deal with
13 the medical examiner's office?

14 A. Just the medical examiner's office Richmond.

15 Q. Okay. So you do the state medical out of Richmond, Virginia?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. All righty. I'll give them a call.

18 So one of the things you were saying is, is that the -- that
19 you looked at the two engineers. One engineer had facial injury,
20 clearly a mouth injury, a knee injury. The other one had a knee
21 injury and a facial injury, and you said he had a depression in
22 his kneecap. Do you remember what leg that was?

23 A. I don't. If I was to guess, I would say right knee.

24 Q. Okay, all right.

25 A. But I'm on not positive.

1 Q. Possibly right. Okay.

2 A. Yeah, it looked like he'd hit his knee on like the head of a
3 bolt up in the cab.

4 Q. So give me an idea of what it looked like as you were walking
5 through the train. Was there a lot of debris in the train cars?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Did the train cars look fairly orderly?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. They looked normal, as if, you know, the train just stopped.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I mean, they even had a couple like bar areas set up on the
13 train, you know, with snacks and stuff and like the snacks weren't
14 turned over and all that.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. None of the children on the train seemed to be upset or even
17 knew what was going on.

18 Q. Oh, there were kids on the train as well?

19 A. Oh, yeah. They all had their families with them.

20 Q. Oh, okay. Can you estimate approximately how many people
21 actually went to the hospital from the train itself?

22 A. From the train itself?

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. Four.

25 Q. Four.

1 A. I believe.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And another, probably, two or three signed refusals.

4 Q. Okay. The four you were talking about, does that include the
5 train crew or not the train crew?

6 A. Not -- no.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Absent the train crew.

9 Q. So these are just the passengers?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 A. [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 Q. Okay. So Capitol Police was the only law enforcement agency
17 you saw?

18 A. Yeah, and I think that there were -- I think railroad police
19 were with them as well, Amtrak Police.

20 Q. Amtrak? Okay.

21 A. [REDACTED]

22 Q. Yeah, sure.

23 A. -- a whole bunch of acronyms.

24 Q. Yes. Yes. Yes, all the initials came out.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay, so --

2 A. Yeah, I had to kick the FRA off the train [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]

4 [REDACTED]

5 Q. [REDACTED]

6 A. [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 Q. Understood.

15 A. I'm like, I am not getting it hung up on me that the chain of
16 custody got broken.

17 Q. Are you aware of anybody on the train videotaping the
18 incident?

19 A. Yes. I don't know who they were.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. But everybody --

22 Q. Everybody.

23 A. -- had their phones out taking pictures, videoing.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Yeah. So, okay.

2 A. Because I think you had press on the train as well. It
3 looked like there was a section that was press people, but --
4 yeah, everybody had their phones.

5 Q. Okay, never mind. I lost my head there for a second. I'm
6 sorry. All right. So, let's see.

7 So the lead locomotive, the head end was the only thing that
8 actually derailed. Everything else was pretty much on the track?

9 A. Correct. And only the front axles derailed.

10 Q. All right.

11 A. The back axles of that locomotive were still on track.

12 Q. Okay. Hopefully I'll be able to get down there and take a
13 look. Okay. All right.

14 So the disposition of those people who -- all the passengers
15 were evacuated from the train. And can you -- do you have some
16 sense of when the last passenger was taken off that train?

17 A. When you say all the passengers were evacuated, you talking
18 about just the injured ones? Because they were never evacuated
19 from the train while I was there.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. The other -- once they disconnected the lead locomotive from
22 it, the train took off back to Charlottesville.

23 Q. Oh, okay. All right. Oh, I see. So the train cars were
24 actually released from the scene; they just left the locomotive
25 there?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. I didn't know that.

5 A. Yeah, they used that rear locomotive to tow it back in the
6 other direction.

7 Q. Okay. Okay. And only four people actually got off the train
8 and was transported --

9 A. As far as I know.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. There could have been some taken off of the back cars that I
12 couldn't see from where I was at because the train stretched over
13 a quarter mile.

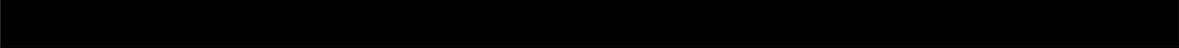
14 Q. Yeah. Okay. Do you have some sense of how many cars were on
15 that train? I don't have the consist in front of me, so I'm not
16 quite sure.

17 A. Twelve, I think, was the number that I heard; 12 or 13.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Because I remember car number 5, where we were looking for
20 the cardiac, was right about the middle of the train.

21 Q. Okay. Okay. Looking back at the response and what you saw,
22 as far as coordination, was there anything that struck you as
23 problematic? Anything that you think needs to be improved?
24 Anything that you were exceptionally pleased about?

25 A. 

1 [REDACTED] And
2 police were on a separate channel from everybody else. So, you
3 know, some of the information I was relaying was medically related
4 or fire rescue hazmat related, and then some of it was law
5 enforcement related.

6 Q. Got it.

7 A. So it was a little difficult to know that the messages were
8 getting through the right people, so I ended up just diverting to
9 sending everything through ECC and letting them make sure the
10 information got to whoever it needed to go.

11 Q. Okay. So explain to me how your ECC actually works. Is your
12 ECC -- well, let's just go back. Talk me about your ECC.

13 A. So our ECC is set up to where the individual dispatchers are
14 assigned to agencies, and then you have call takers. So call
15 takers take 911 call and they send it to the console of whatever
16 agency is going to handle that call.

17 So like when this started, when the call started going out --
18 I'm a firefighter in the county as well, so I heard the call
19 coming out of my fire pager and also then also getting toned out
20 on the police radio. So it's not like one dispatcher handles the
21 incident.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Each dispatcher, depending on what agency they're assigned
24 to, handles their piece of that puzzle.

25 Q. Got you. Okay. So call comes in the -- to 911. The call

1 taker takes the call and says, okay, this is police, this is a
2 fire; goes to a dispatcher. Is this dispatcher -- is there a
3 dispatcher for the county police --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- and a dispatcher for the fire department?

6 A. Fire and Rescue.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And then one for city police and then one for the university
9 police.

10 Q. Okay. So you have the city, the county and the university
11 police agencies.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. And then you have -- is the fire department one fire
14 department?

15 A. No. You have Charlottesville City Fire Department and then
16 you have Albemarle County Fire and Rescue, which encompasses the
17 volunteers as well.

18 Q. Okay. Charlottesville's City.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. And then you have Albemarle.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But there's one dispatcher doing all -- both of those.

24 Q. Oh, okay.

25 A. So the fire rescue dispatcher handles all fire rescue.

1 Q. Oh, okay.

2 A. And then, like when there's a major incident, then what
3 they'll do is they'll switch to a tac channel and they'll assign a
4 dispatcher to that channel. So now you have a dispatcher that's
5 solely handling that incident and then one that's handling all the
6 other fire rescue calls.

7 Q. Now, can the fire and the police patch in?

8 A. They can.

9 Q. They can?

10 A. Yeah, we've done it before.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I don't remember that happening in this incident, but we have
13 done that before. And we can patch in with state police. I mean,
14 anybody who's 800 megahertz, we can patch in with.

15 Q. Okay. So to your knowledge, you don't remember that being --
16 that happening in this?

17 A. I do not.

18 Q. Okay. All right. So were there any other concerns in regard
19 to -- well, let's back up. First of all, have you guys ever
20 received any kind of training from the -- either the local
21 railroad or from Amtrak or from CSX in regards to train
22 emergencies?

23 A. Police department, no; fire department, yes.

24 Q. Okay. I'll explain that later. Okay. All right.

25 Do you remember when the last time that training occurred?

1 A. With the fire department?

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. Three years ago, I think it was.

4 Q. Do you know who sponsored it?

5 A. I don't.

6 Q. Okay, but it was sponsored by the railroad?

7 A. It was a railroad.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah. I just don't remember if it was CSX or Buckingham
10 Branch or whether it was Amtrak or --

11 Q. Gotcha. Okay. Was it a like a tabletop kind of training or
12 was it like a hands on?

13 A. It was a classroom with PowerPoints and basically showing
14 hazmat concerns, fire concerns, extrication for a derailed train,
15 that type of stuff.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It was kind of a familiarization-type thing.

18 Q. Right. Okay. Do you remember how long it -- how long the
19 training was for?

20 A. It was 1 day that I -- 8 hours.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. So when you were on the train, were
22 the only -- how many Amtrak employees were on that train; do you
23 know?

24 A. I don't know. There was a lot of them. I mean, you had the
25 guys that are dressed up in the old-time suits. I'm not sure what

1 they're called on there. You had the waitresses that were working
2 the bars.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED]

13 Q. Okay. All right.

14 A. [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 Q. Okay. So I'm assuming that the electricity was on, that
19 there really wasn't any problem with the actual train car?

20 A. The ventilation system seemed not to be working because it
21 was hot. I mean, it was really hot on the trains and it was a
22 cold day. I mean, it was 20 degrees outside. So it appeared that
23 the ventilation system stopped working. But there was electricity
24 to the train because the red lights on the back the train stayed
25 on the entire time.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And I don't know if it takes electricity for the toilets to
3 work, but they continued to work. People were able to use those.

4 Q. Okay. How did you get on the train?

5 A. Up one of the side stairs or ladders.

6 Q. Okay. And you didn't have any problem going through the
7 doors or anything like that?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. No. They had little push buttons that push on it. So I hit
11 that and every one of the doors opened fine.

12 Q. Okay. So backing up, you said the actual truck that was
13 involved in this came through the fire department parking lot and
14 at the time you saw it the two passengers were actually hanging
15 off the back?

16 A. There was at least one hanging on the back. I don't know
17 about two.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I remember seeing one, which was the one closest to my car
20 when they came across the front of my car.

21 Q. Which one was that when you got to the scene? Was that the
22 obviously deceased or was that the injured one?

23 A. It looked -- I want to -- it's going to be a guess, but I
24 think it was the one that was severely injured. Because the one
25 who was obviously dead, he was a pretty heavysset boy, and I don't

1 remember the guy on the back being that big. It looked to me like
2 he'd have a problem climbing up and down, but -- it looked like
3 the driver should have been the one on the back because he was
4 skinny.

5 Q. Okay. Did you talk to the driver?

6 A. I did not.

7 Q. Okay. Of course I'm going to assume that the severely
8 injured gentleman could not talk?

9 A. No. He never talked. He would grab my arm and squeeze, but
10 he never -- he never spoke, never responded to any of my commands
11 or questions.

12 Q Okay. Were you given any other information, outside the fact
13 that these two guys were ejected out of the cab, from the people
14 there?

15 A. No.

16 Q. All right. Okay, I think that's it. So one of the things
17 that I always ask at the end of an interview is, is there anything
18 that you think I should have asked but I failed to ask you?

19 A. I don't think so.

20 Q. Okay. And did I give you a card yet?

21 A. No.

22 Q. No? Okay. I am going to give you a business card. Please
23 feel free -- if something occurs to you in the middle of the
24 night, don't even worry about the time. Please call my cell and
25 just and let me know. Sometimes it's the little things come back

1 later on that people think of and go, oh, yeah, okay.

2 So the only issue that you had was the communications gap
3 between the fire and the police?

4 A. Yeah, not knowing who actually was that incident commander.

5 Q. Gotcha. By the way, do you guys actually do mass casualty
6 drills?

7 A. Yes. Yeah, we do them up at the airport.

8 Q. Up at the airport?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. When was the last time you had a mass casualty drill?

11 A. They had one this year or this past year, so 2017.

12 Q. Okay. All right. All right. So, again, thank you very
13 much. If you can -- if you think of anything, please feel free to
14 give me a call. I also will tell you that, if any of your co-
15 workers, you think, would have some information, please give them
16 my information as well.

17 Out of curiosity, who was the next arriving officer there
18 from your department; do you remember? If you don't remember --

19 A. I think -- yeah, I don't remember.

20 Q. Yeah, you don't remember. I'll tell you what --

21 A. I don't remember.

22 Q. -- who do you remember being there from your department?

23 A. So the only people I ever saw was -- I mean, I didn't see
24 him. It was over the radio --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- until Derek Davis got there. And he runs -- he's
2 Volunteer Fire Rescue as well.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And he had his medical kit on his back. But he's the only
5 one I ever saw because I was at the front of the train at the
6 point when other people started to arrive.

7 Q. Gotcha.

8 A. So everybody else, I just heard them on the radio.

9 Q. So to make sure that I'm -- so as far as law enforcement
10 agencies that responded from this area, you guys responded. Who
11 else responded?

12 A. From the local area?

13 Q. Yeah, the local area.

14 A. I think we were it.

15 Q. You were it?

16 A. [REDACTED]

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But, yeah, I was surprised I didn't see Virginia State
19 Police.

20 Q. I was wondering did the state police actually --

21 A. No. Well, I say no. I never saw anyone from the state
22 police.

23 Q. Okay. All right.

24 A. And usually they show up to all of our major incidents.

25 Q. All right. And --

1 A. But, like is said, they could have been back in there at the
2 command center and I just never saw them because I was up at the
3 locomotive.

4 Q. Okay. Where was -- ultimately, where was was the command
5 post set up?

6 A. So if you were coming down Railroad Avenue and getting ready
7 to make the left turn across the railroad tracks where the
8 accident occurred --

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. -- they were parked right there on Railroad Avenue, at
11 Lanetown Road.

12 Q. Okay. And so just to make sure I got this right, so we had
13 the Western Albemarle Rescue Squad?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And we also had?

16 A. Charlottesville Albemarle Rescue Squad.

17 Q. Hmm?

18 A. You had Charlottesville Albemarle Rescue Squad.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So you have WARS, CARS and ACFR.

21 Q. Okay. Slow down, slow down, slow down. What? Okay. All
22 right. So we had the Charlotte --

23 A. Charlottesville Albemarle Rescue Squad.

24 Q. Charlottesville Albemarle, okay. This was the rescue squad.

25 A. Yeah, the Western Albemarle Rescue Squad.

1 Q. You had the Western. Okay.

2 A. And you had Albemarle County Fire and Rescue.

3 Q. Fire and Rescue.

4 A. Yeah, and then Crozet Fire Department.

5 Q. And then Crozet. Are all these fire departments dispatched
6 from ECC?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Okay, I actually understand it. Okay. All right.

9 MS. HARLEY: So again, thank you very much. I certainly do
10 appreciate you taking the time and talking to me. Let me give you
11 my card before I forget. And, again, please, please, please feel
12 free to give me a call or to hand my number out to anybody that
13 you think has some information.

14 What'll ultimately happen is that --

15 MR. UNDERWOOD: All right, thank you.

16 MS. HARLEY: -- you guys will -- we'll kind of write
17 everything up.

18 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yep.

19 MS. HARLEY: And you guys will get a chance to look at it and
20 kind of comment on it and give us some feedback of, oh, yeah, we
21 want to add this, because sometimes there's something you want to
22 add, like better communication when a special train like this is
23 coming through our area kind of situation.

24 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

25 MS. HARLEY: Certainly that's something that's reasonable;

1 it's a reasonable concern. And then maybe something that you guys
2 might want to put in a little bit later on.

3 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right.

4 MS. HARLEY: The other issue, of course, and one of the
5 things that we deal with, the railroads are required by law to
6 give training to the fire department, which is strange because a
7 lot of times the police department are the first ones on the
8 scene.

9 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right.

10 MS. HARLEY: So they don't actually give the training to law
11 enforcement. It's not that they refuse to; it just never occurs
12 to them because it's not really a requirement.

13 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right.

14 MS. HARLEY: So one of the things that we say is you need to
15 give it to anybody who's a first responder because you don't know
16 who's going to show up first.

17 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right.

18 MS. HARLEY: So that was one of the issues, when you said,
19 oh, yeah, they give it to the fire department but not to the
20 police department.

21 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right.

22 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Well, thank you so much.

23 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah. So at least they're in compliance.

24 MS. HARLEY: Yeah. Truly, they are.

25 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah, right.

1 MS. HARLEY: But we're just asking they kind of think --

2 MR. UNDERWOOD: A little bit more.

3 MS. HARLEY: -- just think a little bit outside the box, that
4 the first person on the scene just may be a cop.

5 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right, most of the time.

6 MS. HARLEY: And it would be nice if they know what to do,
7 where it's safe to go, and how to access the train and what's
8 going on. So --

9 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

10 MS. HARLEY: -- that's my soapbox. Okay, thank you.

11 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah, that was the big thing I learned about
12 that class I took with the fire department was that, you know, the
13 locomotives are diesel electric.

14 MS. HARLEY: Yes. Yes.

15 MR. UNDERWOOD: So there is a huge electric hazard.

16 MS. HARLEY: Absolutely.

17 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

18 MS. HARLEY: And you guys should also know how to turn them
19 off.

20 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right.

21 MS. HARLEY: And a lot of people, you know --

22 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

23 MS. HARLEY: -- don't. Thank you very much.

24 MR. UNDERWOOD: All right. Well, thank you.

25 MS. HARLEY: It's 10:34. Appreciate the -- keep --

1 MR. UNDERWOOD: All right. You take care.

2 MS. HARLEY: Be safe.

3 MR. UNDERWOOD: Thank you, ma'am.

4 MS. HARLEY: All right. Awesome.

5 MR. UNDERWOOD: Have a good day.

6 MS. HARLEY: All right.

7 (Whereupon, at 10:34 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION OF AMTRAK SPECIAL TRAIN
P0923 31 AT THE HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
CROSSING AT LANETOWN ROAD IN
CROZET, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 2018
Interview of Officer William Underwood

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY18MH005

PLACE: Charlottesville, Virginia

DATE: February 1, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Kimberlee S. Kondrat
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

COLLISION OF AMTRAK SPECIAL TRAIN *

P0923 31 AT THE HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE * Accident No.: HWY18MH005

CROSSING AT LANETOWN ROAD IN *

CROZET, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 2018 *

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Interview of: LT. MICHAEL RABIN
TOM LOACH

Crozet Volunteer Fire Department
5652 Three Notched Road
Crozet, Virginia

Thursday,
February 1, 2018

APPEARANCES:

SHERYL HARLEY, Highway Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:08 p.m.)

1
2
3 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So I'll tell you what -- all right. So
4 it is --

5 LT. RABIN: If you would like, Sheryl, I can call the other
6 guys see if they're available to come in right now.

7 MS. HARLEY: You know, if they're not here, that's fine. I
8 would rather give them an opportunity to decide when they want to
9 come in. I will come in for them. I'm not -- I don't want to
10 interrupt someone's day if they've got something else going on.

11 LT. RABIN: Yeah, I don't know if they're available or not.
12 One of them's a professional firefighter. He was the operator on
13 my truck. And the other one is a professional firefighter and
14 he's at work today. I know that for sure he was the one that was
15 intimately involved with the medical part of it (indiscernible).

16 MS. HARLEY: The one that's at work, what fire department is
17 he in?

18 LT. RABIN: We have two that were on my truck. The driver of
19 my truck was Rodney Rich, Jr., the second.

20 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

21 LT. RABIN: He works for --

22 MR. LOACH: Augusta County.

23 LT. RABIN: -- Augusta County Fire Department, which is the
24 other side of the mountain here.

25 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

1 LT. RABIN: And I think he works at the Dooms Station,
2 D-o-o-m-s.

3 MR. LOACH: Right.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right.

5 LT. RABIN: He is also a captain in this fire department.

6 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

7 LT. RABIN: He was acting as my driver/operator yesterday.

8 MS. HARLEY: And what's the number of your piece?

9 LT. RABIN: It was Engine 52, which is the apparatus that we
10 use primarily for vehicle accidents.

11 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

12 LT. RABIN: It has all the extrication equipment and all that
13 on there.

14 MS. HARLEY: So let me start this. Okay. So February the
15 1st. It's 3:08 p.m. And Lieutenant Mike Rabin?

16 LT. RABIN: Rabin, yes.

17 MS. HARLEY: Okay, I'll just write that down. And your name
18 again, sir?

19 MR. LOACH: Tom, and the last name is Loach, L-o-a-c-h. And
20 I was on second due in.

21 MS. HARLEY: You were on the second due engine. Okay.

22 So I guess what I would like to do, if possible, as I
23 explained to you, that the NTSB looks at survival factors. And
24 one of the things we're looking at is what the first responders
25 saw and any issues they may have had. So, and also, we look at

1 training, for example, what kind of training you had to deal with
2 this kind of incidents as far as trains. So why don't we start
3 from the beginning.

4 INTERVIEW OF LT. MICHAEL RABIN

5 BY MS. HARLEY:

6 Q. What time did you receive the call?

7 A. I don't know the exact time. I want to say around it was
8 around 11:18 because I know that number because I've been doing
9 the report.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I've been through some of the dispatch messages and looked at
12 it. I think it was 11:18.

13 Q. Okay. So the -- it's dispatched, and is it texted and paged
14 also?

15 A. It comes over the house tones. It comes over the pager. It
16 comes over the -- we have a program that we run on our phones
17 called Active 911. So three different methods to receive it.

18 Q. Okay. And what did the call come out as?

19 MR. LOACH: First one came out as a train versus a truck with
20 entrapment. And you were right it was 11:18 -- 11:17:39. It was
21 train versus truck.

22 MS. HARLEY: Okay. You said -- I'm sorry, the time you have,
23 Tom?

24 MR. ROACH: 11:17.

25 MS. HARLEY: Great. Okay.

1 LT. RABIN: 11:17:39 -- 39 seconds.

2 MS. HARLEY: Great, 39. Okay. Great.

3 BY MS. HARLEY:

4 Q. Okay. So then what?

5 A. Myself and Captain Rich were here at the station taking care
6 of some other business. So we waited briefly for another
7 firefighter to show up on the call so we had a complete crew. And
8 that third firefighter was Justin Ide. And we also had a fourth
9 firefighter that showed up, who was Will Schmertzler.

10 Q. Oh, you're going to have to spell these last names.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. Justin's?

13 A. Justin Ide, I-d-e.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. He's a lieutenant here in the department. And Will
16 Schmertzler, S-c-h-m-e-r-t-z-l-e-r.

17 Q. Awesome. Okay.

18 A. And he is a former assistant chief.

19 MR. LOACH: Right.

20 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

21 LT. RABIN: Currently he is just a firefighter, but a former
22 assistant chief.

23 MS. HARLEY: Got you.

24 LT. RABIN: A lifetime member here.

25 BY MS. HARLEY:

1 Q. Okay. So and everyone was on Engine 52?

2 A. Those four were on the first-out piece, which was Engine 52.
3 Was it dispatched to Engine 52 or Engine 58?

4 MR. LOACH: Engine 58.

5 LT. RABIN: It was dispatched Engine 58, but we, in-house,
6 make our own determination based on what we know about the call,
7 which piece to take.

8 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

9 LT. RABIN: So we knew it was a vehicle with possible
10 entrapment, so we opted to take our Engine 52, which has all our
11 extrication equipment and better equipped piece of apparatus for
12 the situation.

13 BY MS. HARLEY:

14 Q. Right. Gotcha. All right. So approximately how long did it
15 take you to get there?

16 A. Probably not more than 2 minutes from here.

17 MR. LOACH: Yeah, about that.

18 BY MS. HARLEY:

19 Q. All right. So walk me through. What did you think?

20 A. Initially when we got there, it didn't really look that bad
21 from the approach that we came in on. We came in on the north
22 side of the train. You could not see initially the trash truck
23 that was on the other side. I got off of the truck, as did the
24 other two firefighters, and we started walking towards the scene
25 and were met by rescue personnel coming the other way, coming back

1 to get more equipment. I asked who was in charge, who was in
2 command at that point so I could do a face-to-face briefing with
3 them and assume command.

4 I never did officially get any answer from anyone in the
5 rescue as to who was in charge. But after the individual I was
6 talking to asked me if I wanted to assume command a couple times,
7 and I could see that he had some sense of urgency in his face, I
8 just went ahead and assumed command. So at that point, I assumed
9 that he had been in command, although I do not know who he was
10 other than he was with Rescue. He's not one of the individuals
11 that I know by name over there.

12 So I assumed command and continued moving towards -- around
13 the train, towards where they were doing the advanced life support
14 on the two individuals laying on the ground.

15 Q. Okay. Did you make any requests for additional?

16 A. Not initially. As I came around the corner, the first thing
17 I saw was a large group of people, which kind of surprised me.
18 And then as I looked down the train, I saw -- I don't know exactly
19 how many, but several what I assumed were police officers in black
20 fatigues with assault rifles walking up and down the train tracks,
21 which got my attention right away.

22 And I asked, as I walked up and continued towards the life
23 support that was going on, why do we have all these people walking
24 around with guns? And someone at that point said to me, this
25 train's full of congressman. So I said, okay, then I'm not too

1 worried about the guns at this point.

2 At that point my focus shifted towards what was going on with
3 the rescue personnel working on the two individuals that were out
4 of the truck at that point. They were on the ground and they were
5 working advanced life support on them. And there was numerous
6 individuals standing around in pretty much a mob scene right
7 around where they were working, so I kind of took charge and tried
8 to get everyone backed away so that the individuals that were
9 working on the two patients weren't being crowded.

10 And I was -- the reply I got from a large majority of them
11 was, we're all doctors. Like, okay, back up. And they did
12 comply, initially, anyway. Then at that point I tried to assess
13 the situation. It was pretty obvious it was critical.

14 And there was some confusion at that point about the Pegasus
15 helicopter that I heard on the radio, that it had been turned
16 around and was going back to the hospital but could turn around
17 again or something like that. I'm not sure exactly what that --
18 what transpired in that conversation. But at that point I got on
19 the radio. It was obvious to me we were going to need them and
20 the rescue people were saying, yes, we need the Pegasus
21 helicopter. So I got on the radio and said, we definitely will
22 need the Pegasus helicopter.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Probably coincident to that, Firefighter Ide, who is also an
25 EMT, assisted the rescue personnel with advanced life support.

1 That -- I mean, we continued -- myself and Firefighter
2 Schmertzler, worked crowd control and started trying to assess the
3 situation. And tried to determine where our best landing zone
4 would be for a helicopter by talking -- at this point there was
5 other units starting to arrive. I think Engine 151 was probably
6 next on scene with Captain John James. Came up, and we had a
7 brief discussion about landing zones. He had seen one a half a
8 mile to the south on the approach he came in.

9 And at that point we mentioned that on the radio. Subsequent
10 to that, someone said, hey, just on the other side of the train,
11 to the north, there's a big flat field that they can land in, and
12 we communicated that also on the radio.

13 I don't really remember at this point what the actual time
14 frame was, whether it was 2 minutes or 10 minutes that this took
15 to transpire. But at some point, as all that was going on,
16 Battalion Chief 13, who is Chief Burkett, I believe, arrived on
17 scene and assumed command from me. And he assigned me to -- I'd
18 have to go back and look at the dispatch. It's in the dispatch
19 texts exactly where he assigned me.

20 But I assume that he wanted me to take over hazmat operations
21 and hazard containment, just general site security kind of stuff,
22 so that's -- at that point that's what we began to do. We went
23 back and pulled the fire hose off the truck, brought it to the
24 scene so that we had fire suppression ability there. And we then
25 started worrying about trying to put some Sta-Dri chemicals down

1 to contain or cover the leaking diesel fuel and hydraulic fluid
2 and antifreeze that was immediately adjacent to where they were
3 working on the patients.

4 Q. Did you ever enter the actual train?

5 A. I did not. Many minutes later, and I can't tell you how
6 many, after thing calmed down a bit and more units arrived on the
7 scene, I did walk the entire length of the train to go and look
8 for hazardous materials leaking, you know, fuel leaking or
9 anything like that, all the way to the front of the train,
10 determining that the train was indeed off the track.

11 I had several people tell me the train was laying on its
12 side. So at some point in there, I communicated that the train
13 was off the track and on its side. But as I walked the train
14 further down, it was evident that there was -- it wasn't that bad.
15 The train was just off the track. It was upright.

16 We questioned numerous people as we went up and down the
17 tracks. There were other medics going in and out of the cars
18 checking for other injured personnel and, I guess, eventually
19 found two or three more that they transferred --

20 MR. LOACH: There were two more. When I went through the
21 train with Chris, there was two more --

22 LT. RABIN: You went through in the train?

23 MR. LOACH: Yeah, you told us. Yeah, so --

24 LT. RABIN: Yeah. I told my guys to go at some point when
25 they were -- things were stabilized, to go and check on the train.

1 But by that point, I think there was other personnel on the train.

2 MR. LOACH: There was two other Albemarle County rescue
3 people on the far end of the train. We took the fore end of the
4 train and walked back.

5 LT. RABIN: So he could tell you more about what was going on
6 inside the train. I did not go in the train.

7 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So I'll tell you what, turn to you, Tom.

8 INTERVIEW OF TOM LOACH

9 BY MS. HARLEY:

10 Q. So where were you?

11 A. I was here for the second -- second call came in at 11 --
12 let's see -- it was 11:28, I think. So I was here with two other
13 firefighters, Chris Rivera and Butch Snead, S-n-e-a-d. So we took
14 Engine 58 and we responded to the scene. So --

15 Q. And upon your arrival, what did you do?

16 A. Upon arrival, the first thing we did was go down and set up
17 cones to block the road because we were afraid that was traffic
18 coming off would be -- you know, it's a short distance. There
19 might be an accident. So we set up cones to block traffic from
20 entering the road.

21 And then we got ordered to set up a LZ for the helicopter.
22 We have strobe light. So we went out set up a LZ with lights for
23 the helicopter. After that, I went back down to command and
24 that's when Mike had us go through the train and ask if there were
25 any --

1 LT. RABIN: Did I tell you guys to set up the LZ or did
2 command tell you to do that? I think you probably got it --

3 MR. LOACH: We got -- probably got it from command to set up
4 the LZ.

5 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

6 LT. RABIN: Yeah.

7 MR. LOACH: A fellow named Pete Oprandy. Pete is an ex chief
8 from here and a retired professional firefighter. So he was
9 there.

10 LT. RABIN: He was actually there before I got there because
11 he was one of the first people I saw when I arrived on scene. But
12 he came, personal vehicle --

13 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

14 LT. RABIN: -- was there. Did not have a lot of interaction
15 with him at that point. He would probably be a good person for
16 you to talk to about what he saw initially.

17 MS. HARLEY: Very good.

18 BY MS. HARLEY:

19 Q. So, I'm sorry, can you give me his last name?

20 A. O-p-r-a-n-d-y, Oprandy.

21 Q. Oprandy.

22 A. Peter Oprandy.

23 Q. Okay. All right.

24 LT. RABIN: His son is actually the chief in Albemarle County
25 Fire and Rescue.

1 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

2 MR. LOACH: So, you know, so when we got to command, Mike had
3 us go through the train to see if there was anybody else in need
4 of medical assistance. So we started at the entrance, first car
5 closest to the railroad gates and work back.

6 And on those cars, which I guess would be the last cars,
7 there was no one who needed assistance. We got up further and
8 there were two other Albemarle County personnel up there who were
9 treating two patients. But the cars that we went through, until
10 we met them, there was nobody who required assistance. So after
11 we finished that, we reported back to command.

12 BY MS. HARLEY:

13 Q. Did command give you any other instructions after that?

14 A. No. You know, after that things were getting settled down.
15 Everybody -- you know, help -- Pegasus was on its way. The
16 ambulances were there. You know, it didn't appear that there --
17 you know, it came out as a mass casualty, but it appeared that
18 now, you know, we didn't have multiple of multiple victims that
19 were going to need help, so --

20 LT. RABIN: There was a bit of confusion about the best
21 approach to the scene, because you could come from this direction,
22 up Railroad Avenue and over the bridge, or you could come around
23 the other way, up Jarmans Gap through Orchard Acres. And there
24 was quite a of discussion at one time or another about what the
25 best approach was. That was fairly early on in sequence because I

1 was still on the radio telling people that I thought that they
2 should go up Jarmans Gap, that way.

3 There seemed to be some confusion there, and I'm not sure
4 where it entered in, but I had made that decision based on knowing
5 that our fire truck and the initial arriving ambulances already
6 had the road blocked, so anybody coming from that direction was
7 not going to be able to get very close to the scene, and it was
8 still fairly open on the other side. And eventually, a lot of
9 equipment did show up on that side.

10 But it seemed like there was some confusion about the best
11 approach to get the later-arriving ambulances and fire units in.

12 BY MS. HARLEY:

13 Q So explain to me your radio communications. So all of -- so
14 all of the fire department and fire rescue services in this area
15 are dispatched from ECC, which is one organization. Is that
16 correct?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So how does that work? So I call 911, and let's say I'm a
19 block -- I'm a mile down the road. So what happens? Are there
20 specific dispatchers for the specific areas or --

21 A. No. The ECC covers Albemarle County and Charlottesville.
22 And they actually dispatch both police and fire from that central
23 location.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And they have, they have a -- and you guys can speak to them,

1 but they have a system where, depending on the type of call,
2 depends on what units they dispatch. So in other words, this was
3 the 11:28 -- tThis is our active 911. But you can see that these
4 are the -- when this came over with a mass casualty, then they
5 made sure that all the additional units that were dispatched out
6 of that call.

7 Q. Oh, I see.

8 A. So --

9 Q. So we have Engine 151. That's just near --

10 A. 151 Ivy.

11 Q. Out of Charlotte. Out of Ivy.

12 A. That's out of Ivy. Right.

13 LT. RABIN: Ivy, yeah. That's the next closest station to
14 us.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay, what does AP 12 stand for?

16 LT. RABIN: Albemarle Police, I believe.

17 MR. LOACH: Yeah. So and Albemarle Police, you had Engine --
18 you know, the rescue squads.

19 BY MS. HARLEY:

20 Q. So actually, what you actually see on your dispatch is
21 everything -- fire and police -- that's being that's being
22 dispatched?

23 A. We see it on Active 911, but that's our system that's in
24 communication with ECC. It's not --

25 LT. RABIN: This is something that we pay for here

1 individually at the station.

2 MS. HARLEY: Oh, okay.

3 LT. RABIN: It's not supplied by the county. The county
4 sends a text message.

5 MR. LOACH: Right.

6 LT. RABIN: Which, this is the one that just came in. It may
7 still have the one on here from yesterday. Yes, it does,
8 actually. So if, as a station, we hadn't decided to spend our own
9 money and purchase this program, this is what we would get: the
10 house tone and we would get these text messages.

11 Okay. So here's --- test, test, test. This was Tuesday at
12 8:35. They were testing this system. And Monday they were
13 testing the system. But yesterday, at 11:18, I got the first text
14 message that says motor vehicle collision, is what MBC is, with
15 entrapment. I don't know what F/R is. Lanetown Road, Marymount
16 Farm Road, Crozet.

17 It dispatched -- initial dispatch was Engine 151; Rescue 5
18 Duty; Engine 58; County Duty -- I don't know what the duty part of
19 that is -- Squad 505, which is the heavy rescue squad unit that
20 they have here, which is the vehicle crash extrication unit that
21 they have here; Rescue 501, which is an ambulance; C508, which is
22 car 508, which is a command vehicle for the rescue squad; Station
23 5 Chief, which is us -- the chief here. And then it says train
24 versus truck.

25 So that was the initial dispatch that we got over the text

1 message, at least the one that I got. I don't know if everybody
2 got the exact same. They should have, everyone should get the
3 same --

4 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

5 LT. RABIN: -- text message.

6 And then it went a little bit further. Fast train versus
7 truck, Albemarle Police, Engine 151. If we didn't respond within
8 2 minutes, then they would re-tone us, and this may be the re-tone
9 right here. Or it actually looks like they just added a bunch of
10 police because it's Engine 151; Rescue 5; duty Engine 5; Albemarle
11 Police 28, 48, 84, 91, 98, 220; and Battalion Chief 13, who's an
12 Albemarle County battalion chief; and County Duty Squad 50. I
13 don't know what that is.

14 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

15 LT. RABIN: So a lot of these text messages are going to
16 appear to be duplicate messages because somebody hasn't responded;
17 they're re-toning.

18 MS. HARLEY: Oh, I see. And they re-tone the whole message
19 out?

20 LT. RABIN: Sometimes --

21 MR. LOACH: And as they add units, and then they add
22 addendums to the text message, which just gives you any additional
23 information that they have, you know, in other words. And you can
24 probably get this all from ECC and get a transcript of this, you
25 know, make it more clear. But that's -- this is how we get the

1 message and addendums to the -- what's going on.

2 MS. HARLEY: So your station actually goes through the added
3 steps of getting this this Active 911 --

4 LT. RABIN: Yes.

5 MS. HARLEY: -- system? Good for you.

6 LT. RABIN: And we do it for several reasons. It's an
7 accountability program for us. We can tell -- I don't know if
8 you're familiar with it at all, but if everyone's using it like we
9 should be using it, you can see who's going to be responding and
10 who's not going to be responding because it has all your personnel
11 here. And it will tell -- if they've opened up the program and
12 pushed the button that says, you know, I'm unavailable or I'm POV
13 or fire department. Then we have the ability to look at that. It
14 shows up every time somebody responds. I can hit response here
15 for this last call I just went on. Six people responded. Five of
16 them responded they were not available. Will Schmertzler
17 responded he was coming to the fire department.

18 Well, I was already here with someone else and we knew,
19 pretty much, what it was before we left the building so I went
20 ahead and left with just two of us and the smaller engine that was
21 actually dispatched. But he came to the fire department. He got
22 here just as we were pulling out and we told him to stay here in
23 case it did develop, there was someone here to take the next
24 truck. And several other people showed up too, but they didn't
25 bother to respond here.

1 MS. HARLEY: It's a good system.

2 LT. RABIN: So it's an accountability system. It gives us
3 mapping capability. You're supposed to be able to click on the --
4 this is past incidents, so it may not work. But you get a current
5 incident, then you click on --

6 MR. LOACH: Gives you Google Maps.

7 LT. RABIN: -- this here. It brings up the map and it give
8 you routing to the incident.

9 MS. HARLEY: Awesome.

10 LT. RABIN: So we use it a lot for that. We have iPads in
11 all -- well, most of the apparatus, that we have the same program
12 on. And that's primarily what we use to navigate to our call.

13 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

14 LT. RABIN: Unless -- I mean, a lot of the guys have lived
15 here for 65 years. They know right where they're going. I have
16 only lived there for 20 years, and I have a pretty good idea of
17 where I'm going, but --

18 MR. LOACH: Because a lot of our area is rural.

19 MS. HARLEY: Yes.

20 MR. LOACH: And it's described as, oh, yeah, where I got the
21 deer last year and, you know --

22 MS. HARLEY: Oh, yeah --

23 LT. RABIN: Yeah, you know the big oak tree behind the rock
24 where I sat when I killed that trophy buck, kind of thing.

25 MR. LOACH: Yeah, down the road a piece.

1 MS. HARLEY: Right. So that explains the extent of geography
2 or land that you cover.

3 LT. RABIN: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, this -- this is I-64.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

5 LT. RABIN: Okay? This is --

6 MR. LOACH: Blue Ridge Mountain.

7 LT. RABIN: Blue Ridge Park. That's actually Skyline Drive
8 here --

9 MR. LOACH: Oh, yeah.

10 LT. RABIN: -- till you get to 64 and then it turns to Blue
11 Ridge Parkway and goes all the way to North Carolina. So we cover
12 from Skyline Drive down to where we are right here. Right there
13 actually.

14 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

15 LT. RABIN: Down this way probably, what, 5 miles, 6 miles?

16 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

17 LT. RABIN: This direction. And then we go all the way up to
18 the county line in Greene County, up there, which is a long way.
19 And if your house catches on fire up there, it's --

20 MR. LOACH: Yeah, you're in trouble.

21 LT. RABIN: -- it's probably going to burn to the ground.

22 MS. HARLEY: Yeah. So your northern border is Greene County?

23 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

24 LT. RABIN: Greene County line, yep.

25 MS. HARLEY: All right. Okay, so 5 miles east of here is

1 your eastern border?

2 LT. RABIN: Let's see -- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 -- and if you go to
3 the furthest extent, it could be 7 or 8 miles.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right, so -- and we've got Skyline to
5 the west and your southern border would be?

6 LT. RABIN: It's -- I don't that there's actually a road or a
7 geographic thing there. Some places there's a road. Some places
8 it's kind of a generic thing. And most of the time when we have a
9 call, it would be dispatched in one of these border areas, so it
10 would be two units coming. So the unit down here in North Garden,
11 they would respond. And it's always kind of a race to see who
12 gets there first.

13 And it just depends where it is. You know, they may have
14 better road access from coming from their direction than we have.
15 Some places you have to go, you know, the long way around to get
16 there. So but from our station to the south -- let's see -- 1, 2,
17 3, 4 -- 5 or 6 miles.

18 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Did either one of you have contact with
19 the train crew?

20 LT. RABIN: I attempted contact with the individual who was
21 on the rear engine -- I think he was in our meeting this morning
22 -- with the big bushy beard.

23 MS. HARLEY: Oh, okay.

24 LT. RABIN: I tried to identify who the engineer of the train
25 was, and I asked him and he said no. And I said, where can I find

1 the engineer? And he said, I'm not the engineer. And then he
2 kind of loosened up a little bit and said he may be on the front
3 of the train. So that's when I started walking toward -- I never
4 did find the engineer on the front of the train.

5 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right.

6 LT. RABIN: I don't know he had been moved back in, further
7 in the train and they were -- medics up there were treating him or
8 not. I know he was one of the individuals that was transported.
9 I believe initially he did not want to go to the hospital but
10 subsequently was convinced that he should probably go get checked
11 out.

12 MS. HARLEY: And so you didn't actually physically see him?

13 LT. RABIN: I did not.

14 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Did you have any contact with the train
15 crew?

16 MR. LOACH: Yeah. I mean, they helped direct us onto the
17 train. It was a steep grade even getting up to the train, getting
18 on the, you know, the platform of the train to get in. So they
19 helped us get in. And then I saw several different crew members
20 during my walkthrough, you know, of the other cars and they were
21 essentially talking to other people on the cars, making sure, I
22 guess, everybody was all right too, you know.

23 LT. RABIN: They were pursers or --

24 MR. LOACH: I don't know. So at least two or three --

25 LT. RABIN: And then -- but they were uniformed.

1 MR. LOACH: Yeah. Saw two or three of them in the uniforms,
2 but, you know.

3 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

4 MR. LOACH: I guess they would --

5

6

7 LT. RABIN: No.

8 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

9 LT. RABIN: Which was one of the things I thought we might
10 want to bring up.

11 MR. LOACH: Yeah, we don't know who's coming through and what
12 they're coming through with.

13 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Has the railroad ever provided the fire
14 department and the services around here with any kind of training
15 dealing with train derailments and stuff like that?

16 LT. RABIN: Not in the 3 years I've been here.

17 MR. LOACH: Yeah, I think we have in the past had, you know,
18 just conversations with them. I would check with the chief about
19 it. And I know that there are times when, if there's a shutdown
20 of the line or if there's, you know, if -- for instance, we had
21 two people hit right up here in town by the train. It was two
22 DOAs. You know, so everything gets shut down and, you know, they
23 notify -- no trains to get through and that. So, you know, in
24 that context, there's communication.

25 As far as training, I don't know. I mean, there was some

1 conjecture, and I guess it's only conjecture, is that, you know --
2 the usual trains we get through are, you know, several passenger
3 trains a day. But most them are slower moving coal trains, you
4 know.

5 LT. RABIN: I've been on one other train incident here, and
6 it was a suicide. The guy --

7 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

8 LT. RABIN: -- walked in front of the train to kill himself.
9 But that's the only other train incident I've dealt with, and it
10 was much lower key than this.

11 MS. HARLEY: So one of the things that -- one of the other
12 issue areas that we look at is whether or not the railroad is
13 providing first responders with adequate training when it comes to
14 things like train derailments. But just basic safety
15 familiarization, how to shut off -- emergency shut off, do you
16 know where to find it? And if you shut it off, what do you do?

17 MR. LOACH: Right.

18 MS. HARLEY: That kind of situation. How to deal with any
19 kind of operation you'll have on the train where you might have an
20 active track. Those are things that they are actually required to
21 do. One of the issues that we do have with the railroads are that
22 a lot of them will do it, but they'll only do it with the fire
23 department and they don't extend the training to the police
24 department -- not deliberately.

25 LT. RABIN: Right, yeah. Right.

1 MS. HARLEY: It just isn't anything that they think of. But
2 one of the things that we are checking on, that they are doing
3 what they're supposed to do, which is they are providing you an
4 opportunity to be familiar with their equipment, to work around
5 their equipment and to know what you have to do to stay safe in
6 the event that there is an issue.

7 LT. RABIN: No.

8 MS. HARLEY: No?

9 LT. RABIN: In that context, no training.

10 MS. HARLEY: No training? Okay.

11 LT. RABIN: Anyway they --

12 MR. LOACH: That's not to say that we haven't had the
13 opportunity. We don't know that we've had the opportunity. They
14 may have --

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

16 LT. RABIN: Yeah, or --

17 MR. LOACH: -- extended an opportunity and we didn't take
18 advantage of it.

19 LT. RABIN: That's why I say you can speak to chief about
20 that.

21 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

22 LT. RABIN: But since I've been here, and I've only been here
23 for 3 years. I'm new to this game.

24 MS. HARLEY: And your chief is?

25 LT. RABIN: But there have been no offers that I'm aware of.

1 MR. LOACH: Chief is Mike Boyle, B-o-y-l-e.

2 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

3 MR. LOACH: The only thing I thought was unusual, when they
4 talked about the train, was the speed of the train as it comes
5 through Crozet. Because I know if I'm coming down 240 and there's
6 a train coming and I'm going the same -- about 35 miles an hour is
7 what, you know, I'm usually pacing that train at coming down the
8 road. So if this was doing what they said it was doing, 60,
9 that's a lot faster than I've, you know, and --

10 LT. RABIN: We don't know that it was doing 60. Those were
11 numbers that we heard walking around out there. Some said 50 to
12 60 miles an hour, but --

13 MR. LOACH: But if, you know --

14 LT. RABIN: -- I have no idea how fast it was going.

15 MR. LOACH: If it was -- I'm just saying, if -- you know, if
16 the guy was one of those things and said, well, I can beat it, you
17 know, maybe he was used that coal train's coming, which are coming
18 a lot slower, and he made a wrong decision based on what his
19 perception of the speed of the train was coming through. Because
20 both gates were down.

21 LT. RABIN: They were down when we arrived.

22 MR. LOACH: Right.

23 LT. RABIN: That's all we know.

24 MS. HARLEY: Are there also bells on those gates, do you
25 know?

1 LT. RABIN: I don't know.

2 MR. LOACH: That I don't know.

3 LT. RABIN: There are lights there.

4 MR. LOACH: There are flashing lights.

5 MS. HARLEY: Do you know how many grade crossings, how many
6 -- how many places that you deal with where you actually have a
7 public roadway going across those tracks?

8 LT. RABIN: In our first due? We can get a map and figure it
9 out, probably.

10 MR. LOACH: Well, they closed the other two, so it's just --
11 that's the only one I can --

12 LT. RABIN: Isn't there one right down here by Star Hill?
13 There's a couple houses on the other side of the tracks there that
14 we --

15 MR. LOACH: Yes, there's two.

16 LT. RABIN: So there's one --

17 MR. LOACH: One on --

18 LT. RABIN: -- just down the street here, and I don't think it
19 has a gate on it.

20 MR. LOACH: No, the one down the street on Route 240 is non-
21 gated. And that's -- the second one is that one on Lanetown, and
22 that is gated.

23 LT. RABIN: Trying to look for the name of the road over
24 there. This doesn't have a name. It's right here. It's not --
25 doesn't even have the railroad on it.

1 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

2 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Did either one of you have any contact
3 with the driver of the truck?

4 MR. LOACH: Negative.

5 LT. RABIN: No. I probably walked right by him and did not
6 know. Because I was later informed that he walked that way. But
7 I did not talk to him or identify him as the driver of the truck.

8 MS. HARLEY: Okay. When you arrived on scene, which rescue
9 unit was working on the two passengers of the vehicle?

10 LT. RABIN: It was units from our rescue sister, rescue squad
11 that's right around the corner. I can't tell you if it was 502
12 or --

13 MR. LOACH: Western Albemarle Rescue Squad.

14 LT. RABIN: I can't tell you what the numbers of the vehicles
15 were.

16 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

17 LT. RABIN: It was probably 501 or 502, would be my guess,
18 but that's -- would be strictly a guess.

19 MS. HARLEY: Okay, Western Albemarle Rescue Squad. Okay.
20 What street are they on, by the way?

21 LT. RABIN: They are on --

22 MR. LOACH: It's Crozet Avenue.

23 LT. RABIN: -- Crozet Avenue.

24 MS. HARLEY: On Crozet?

25 LT. RABIN: If you go to the four-way stop and hang a right,

1 they're like that second building there on the right.

2 MS. HARLEY: Oh. Okay. I actually know where that is. Okay.

3 And did you have a -- did you get the opportunity to actually
4 observe close up the two victims that they were working on?

5 LT. RABIN: I did.

6 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So give me your impression of what you
7 saw.

8 LT. RABIN: Well, I saw them doing CPR on both of them. I saw
9 a lot of blood. I saw basically that they were doing advanced
10 life support and that both of the individuals they were working on
11 were in very bad shape. Neither one of them appeared to be
12 conscious. One, I noticed, had an airway inserted in him.

13 And I didn't really pay that much attention because there was
14 plenty of people down there. I was more concerned with keeping
15 people away from the area as opposed to getting involved because
16 they seemed to have plenty of personnel working on the folks
17 there.

18 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So I asked you a question about that.

19 Okay. Did anyone tell you where these guys came from?

20 LT. RABIN: No. You mean, which direction they came from
21 or --

22 MS. HARLEY: Whether they were in the truck; one was in the
23 truck, somebody was hanging off the truck. Any --

24 LT. RABIN: There was a lot of speculation while we were
25 there during the, you know, 2 hours or 3 hours that we were there.

1 I heard a lot of different speculation on, you know, people's
2 theories. But when I left there last night I had no idea if the
3 individual that was -- if the fatality was the driver. Or if
4 there was three people in the truck or if one was riding on the
5 tail board. And I really had no idea what the actual situation
6 was -- who was killed and who survived and where they were
7 located.

8 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

9 LT. RABIN: Other than what I heard there. And even right
10 now, I'm not a hundred percent sure that what I heard is --

11 MR. LOACH: Yeah, same sense.

12 LT. RABIN: -- is the truth. I mean, it was --

13 BY MS. HARLEY:

14 Q. So Tom, when you were walking through the train, did you
15 notice anything unusual? Was there any debris? Was there any --
16 did it look like anything was thrown around? Was there anything
17 out of the ordinary?

18 A. No. I mean, by the time I got there, the people were seated,
19 were calm, you know what I mean? I guess it was -- the only
20 people I followed on the train was, I guess, the two congressmen
21 who were like physicians. And I followed -- they were getting
22 back on the train when we got on a train, the same time. And they
23 were just -- one of them was washing up and one, you know, was
24 taking his shirt off because there was blood on it.

25 But that, you know -- but, like I say, walking through,

1 everybody seemed fine. They were all seated. They were -- you
2 know no one was panicky and --

3 Q. Did you see any seats that looked like they had either become
4 detached from the floor, anything that looks like anything was
5 torn from the bulk head?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Anything like that?

8 A. Not that I noticed.

9 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So let's see. The time that you
10 responded -- okay. The -- do you have a sense, either one of you,
11 of when the last victim -- and when I'm -- I'm talking about the
12 victims that needed to be transported to the hospital, when they
13 actually left the scene?

14 LT. RABIN: You mean as far as the time?

15 MS. HARLEY: A general time. Like it took 20 minutes --

16 LT. RABIN: I mean, I was there when they pulled the second
17 two --

18 MR. LOACH: ECC will give you the exact time because they
19 would -- the ambulance would be able to report when they're en
20 route to the hospital.

21 LT. RABIN: They moved the train. They disconnected the
22 derailed engine, and they used the other engine that was on the
23 back of the train and moved the train up to the crossing in order
24 to get those people off of the train. And they brought them off
25 of the train in what they call a stair chair.

1 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

2 LT. RABIN: And there was two individuals that came off the
3 train -- two or three?

4 MR. LOACH: I was down further from that --

5 LT. RABIN: I know two, for sure. There possibly was a third
6 that they brought off in a stair chair and then transported -- or
7 transferred him to an ambulance bed and then wheeled him on the
8 bed down to the ambulance and took him away.

9 MS. HARLEY: So let me ask you a question. Your ambulances,
10 are they part of the fire department or are they --

11 MR. LOACH: Separate entity.

12 MS. HARLEY: They're a complete separate entity?

13 LT. RABIN: Here.

14 MR. LOACH: Here

15 LT. RABIN: At this station. We have no medical license at
16 this station. We have some individuals here who are professional
17 firefighters who have medical licenses --

18 MS. HARLEY: Gotcha. Understood.

19 LT. RABIN: -- from their other jobs. But myself and Tom,
20 for instance, you know, are professions are other firefighting.
21 We have CPR training, but other than that we don't have any --
22 well, unless you -- Tom has -- Tom was a medical, but --

23 MR. LOACH: Yeah. Western Albemarle is a separate entity.
24 That said, Albemarle County Fire and Rescue does have ambulances
25 attached to their stations as well. Like 151 has both fire and

1 rescue equipped, you know, trucks.

2 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

3 LT. RABIN: So their fire truck -- actually the one that came
4 yesterday, came as Engine 151, I believe. It might have come as
5 Medic 151.

6 MS. HARLEY: Medic 1- -- okay.

7 LT. RABIN: But I think it came as Engine 151 with a medic on
8 board. Some of this nomenclature has changed recently about how
9 they're calling people and --

10 MR. LOACH: Yeah, you have to --

11 LT. RABIN: -- you'll have to talk to ECC.

12 MR. LOACH: ECC.

13 LT. RABIN: And Albemarle County chiefs to get the lowdown on
14 that.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

16 LT. RABIN: We are always dispatched as brush truck, engine,
17 tanker, tower, because we have no medical.

18 MS. HARLEY: Got it.

19 LT. RABIN: And we get dispatched occasionally to a medical
20 call to assist the rescue squad.

21 MS. HARLEY: Got it.

22 MR. LOACH: Right.

23 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So you got on the scene and Mr. Oprandy,
24 Chief Oprandy was there before you. Is that --

25 MR. LOACH: Ex-Chief Oprandy was there when when I got there.

1 He was sitting --

2 LT. RABIN: He was there when I got there also, because I
3 said hello to him as I passed him. And we didn't really exchange
4 any information. He hadn't really done any size-up or anything
5 like that. He was kind of there just to assist in whatever.

6 MR. LOACH: And he's an ex-captain, Charlottesville Police --
7 he's a retired captain in Charlottesville Fire Department.

8 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

9 LT. RABIN: Yeah. He's really experienced.

10 MS. HARLEY: How does your radio system operate in terms of
11 being able to communicate with the police on a major incident like
12 this?

13 LT. RABIN: Poorly.

14 MR. LOACH: Poorly. Yeah, we don't because there's --

15 LT. RABIN: We don't communicate with the police except face-
16 to-face, at least I never have in the 3 years I've been here.

17 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

18 LT. RABIN: On the radio -- I have never communicated with
19 the police on the radio.

20 MS. HARLEY: So --

21 MR. LOACH: There is -

22 LT. RABIN: I think our radios actually do have the
23 capability?

24 MR. LOACH: Yes.

25 LT. RABIN: Let me go grab one.

1 MR. LOACH: Yeah, they probably have the capabilities of
2 switching over to police. That is not standard practice for us
3 though.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

5 MR. LOACH: We usually keep them separate entities.

6 MS. HARLEY: All right.

7 MR. LOACH: Matter of fact, I can't remember a time when I've
8 used the police frequency.

9 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So usually, if there was a message you
10 wanted to send to an officer --

11 MR. LOACH: It would be through ECC.

12 MS. HARLEY: So it would go through ECC. So you would just
13 through the dispatcher and do it that way?

14 MR. LOACH: Right.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

16 MR. LOACH: Because, remember, ECC dispatches both fire and
17 the police, so they have the ability to, you know, cross-
18 communicate easily.

19 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

20 LT. RABIN: So I don't know what you call these, if they're
21 bands or what, but we have basically three sections of the radio,
22 an A, B and C section. So we primarily operate on A, and it goes
23 from dispatch -- switches where dispatch dispatches the call. And
24 we monitor response -- this is our primary station that we monitor
25 the majority of the time. And that's when we respond back. And

1 on a minor incident, we would typically just stay on that channel
2 and conduct all operations on that channel.

3 A major incident, where there's going to be a lot of radio
4 traffic, we almost immediately switch to a tactical channel. So
5 the next one on the radio Alpha Tac-3, and that's where we were
6 yesterday.

7 MS. HARLEY: Got you.

8 LT. RABIN: And at some point yesterday, they switched some
9 of the operations to Alpha Tac-4 because Alpha Tac-3 got way too
10 congested and nobody could communicate with anybody.

11 MR. LOACH: Right. Ao --

12 LT. RABIN: I don't remember who went to Alpha Tac-4.

13 MR. LOACH: I don't know. But they'll break down certain --
14 you know, between operations, you know, and other entities. Like
15 yesterday, over at triage, there was a whole bunch of things that
16 I heard going on. So --

17 LT. RABIN: Yeah.

18 MR. LOACH: It was multiple commands.

19 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

20 LT. RABIN: But in this Alpha channel, you got Tac Channel 3,
21 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 -- and I don't know what this is; I don't
22 know what BFR-1 is. This is an EMS channel. Fire and Rescue
23 operator on the same channels. So on a typical car accident, the
24 rescue squad and the fire department will be on the same channel.

25 MS. HARLEY: While you were on the scene, did anyone from the

1 railroad actually come up to you and provide you any kind of
2 technical assistance?

3 MR. LOACH: None to me.

4 LT. RABIN: None.

5 MR. LOACH: No one -- when I was on the train, did any of
6 them identify themselves as such.

7 LT. RABIN: I mean, it was obvious some of the -- I don't
8 know what you call the train attendants. It's flight attendant;
9 is what they call them in the airline business. But I don't know
10 if they're called stewards or --

11 MR. LOACH: Whatever, yeah.

12 LT. RABIN: You know, I don't know what you call them. But
13 there was a number of those people -- well, I wasn't inside the
14 train, but there was a number of them outside the train. I don't
15 know if they were trying to get air or what, but most of the
16 people there -- [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]

22 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

23 LT. RABIN: But they were all -- I can't remember running
24 into any of them that were uniformed. But I did --

25 [REDACTED]

1 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

2 [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]

4 [REDACTED]

5 LT. RABIN: -- I didn't really address any of them. [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 MS. HARLEY: Did you, by any chance, see any Amtrak police on
11 the scene?

12 MR. LOACH: No, not that I remember.

13 LT. RABIN: Not that I remember and can specifically identify
14 as Amtrak police, no.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So -- all right, so no one from the
16 railroad. All right. So how did the operation go with your
17 incident command setup and the police department's incident
18 command? Is it something where it's a -- is it one -- is it a
19 unified command system command?

20 LT. RABIN: It is. It is. We preach and practice that here.
21 And I know there was a command post set up. I did not spend much
22 time at the command post, so I don't know how involved the police
23 were with the fire department command post that was set up. I
24 can't tell you.

25 MR. LOACH: Yeah. Albemarle County brought their mobile

1 command post -- command center, I guess it would be.

2 LT. RABIN: Yeah, but that was much later. There was
3 initially -- the command post was set up by Battalion Chief 13,
4 who arrived on the north side of the scene and parked actually
5 right behind our engine. So he was there very shortly after we
6 got there and he set up the command post there. I did not realize
7 where he was initially. I was just talking to him on the radio
8 and wishing I could talk to him face-to-face, but I wasn't going
9 to leave what I was doing in the immediate area and walk back
10 across the tracks to go to find him.

11 And then that's -- I mean, he set up where he should set
12 up --

13 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

14 LT. RABIN: -- in my opinion. He was fairly close to the
15 scene. He probably couldn't see what was going on with the ALS
16 stuff, but he doesn't really need to see it. He knows what's
17 going on. And then, as more and more chiefs started to show up,
18 the accountability process started to take place and they were
19 assigning different things to different groups.

20 And I don't know how the police were integrated into that
21 command post. I can't tell you. You'd have to talk to one of the
22 chiefs that were working at command posts.

23 You know, we have police that we see all the time here and I
24 saw some of them, but they were not in the command structure.
25 They were out, you know, doing the same thing we were doing.

1 MS. HARLEY: Talking about personnel accountability, do you
2 have any kind of system that deals with a major incident as far as
3 keeping track of individuals? So let me -- let me see if I can
4 explain it a little better than I asked it, okay?

5 For example, I spent 10 years as a paid fireman. I was also
6 a volunteer back in Washington, D.C. We had what we call a ring-
7 tag system. Each one of us -- (indiscernible)

8 (Sirens.)

9 MR. LOACH: The same way. No, it's this one. Must be
10 (indiscernible).

11 MS. HARLEY: Each one of us was given a ring tag. That ring
12 tag represented a specific firefighter. If it was a major
13 incident, that ring tag was either kept with the piece or it was
14 given to the command post so they kept track of --

15 LT. RABIN: We do the same.

16 MS. HARLEY: -- who was there. What do you call that system
17 here?

18 MR. LOACH: We have a --

19 LT. RABIN: PAS tag system.

20 MR. LOACH: -- PAS tag.

21 MS. HARLEY: Pass tag?

22 LT. RABIN: Personal Accountability System.

23 MR. LOACH: Something, yeah. But each of us have helmet tags
24 that we have on Velcro that we give to the driver.

25 LT. RABIN: I can show you some.

1 MR. LOACH: And the driver gives them to command.

2 LT. RABIN: We have -- each engine has a Velcro sticker or a
3 tab, whatever you want to call it, with the engine number Velcro'd
4 to that. And then, on each of our helmets, we have tags. We're
5 supposed to have three of these tags. Depending on what your
6 status is, if you're a regular firefighter, you're black. If
7 you're a rookie firefighter with no qualifications, you can't go
8 into the immediate danger of life and health area; then you're
9 red. If you're an officer, you're yellow. And if you're a chief,
10 you're white.

11 MS. HARLEY: Got it.

12 LT. RABIN: And they're supposed to all say 5 on them. This
13 one doesn't for some reason, but 5 being our station.

14 MS. HARLEY: Got it.

15 LT. RABIN: So the way it's supposed to work -- it's a little
16 different here probably than it is at a paid station where you
17 have a shift that shows up and everybody knows who's going to be
18 on the engine before you -- you never know here who's going to be
19 on the engine when you leave, until you leave.

20 MS. HARLEY: Right.

21 LT. RABIN: So what we do -- what we're supposed to do, when
22 we get to the scene, on a scene like this, I'm first at the scene.
23 I'm not too worried about it. I know who came with me -- no idea
24 who's there. I'm there for the initial scene size-up, initial
25 command. I'm not worry too much about accountability at that

1 point.

2 But what I should do is take one tag from each of my guys and
3 put it on the door sticker, and the next guy who comes in should
4 be able to grab that. That's in an ideal world. What actually
5 happens is, somebody gets there and goes, we need to set up
6 accountability, and they run around and they grab tags off
7 everyone's helmet.

8 MS. HARLEY: Yep.

9 LT. RABIN: And that happened to me yesterday. Somebody came
10 up to me and said, let me have one of your PAS tags. And I went
11 and grabbed my PAS tag from Justin -- or his PAS tag --

12 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

13 LT. RABIN: -- and gave it and then they all took that to the
14 command post. So it's not a perfect system but it works fairly
15 well.

16 MS. HARLEY: The fact you have a system is actually --

17 LT. RABIN: What we are eventually going to go to, and we
18 have started the process, is a computerized system more on a fire
19 incident than on an incident like this, that our new SCBA bottles
20 and stuff are all Bluetooth capable and they have a computer that
21 can talk at the command post which will tell you the air status.
22 And I think at some point it will have GPS capability so you'll be
23 able to locate the individual.

24 However, at this point -- I know we have the computer. We
25 haven't set it up and we haven't practiced with it at all. And I

1 don't know that anyone else in the county has either. And it's
2 one of the things that will be great if we were practiced and used
3 it all the time, it would work great. But it's not going to work
4 so great for us here because it's a volunteer squad and everyone's
5 not going to be familiar enough with it to make it work, I don't
6 think. But it has the capability to sound an evacuation and a
7 little light will flash inside your mask and your tones will go
8 off on your PAS device --

9 MS. HARLEY: Wow. That is awesome.

10 LT. RABIN: -- for evacuation. And it will send a low-air
11 alarm back to command post so they can call you and say, hey,
12 Lieutenant Rabin, you're getting low on air; come on out.

13 So it's a good system. I'm not sure how functional it's
14 going to be here, but it's worth a try.

15 MS. HARLEY: All right.

16 LT. RABIN: But we're not there yet on that. We're still
17 doing it with the Velcro.

18 MS. HARLEY: Well, don't worry about it. You seem to be way
19 ahead of D.C., so.

20 LT. RABIN: Oh, really?

21 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

22 LT. RABIN: I mean, a large majority of our problem is being
23 a volunteer department. You were, I assume, in a volunteer
24 department?

25 MS. HARLEY: Yeah, I was a volunteer and also paid, yeah.

1 LT. RABIN: So yeah, you obviously have different levels of
2 volunteerism -

3 MR. LOACH: It's like herding cattle.

4 LT. RABIN: -- and commitment.

5 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

6 LT. RABIN: You know, so trying to get everybody here on a
7 Saturday to do the training required doesn't always happen.

8 MS. HARLEY: Got you. Okay.

9 So at this particular point we discussed kind of the initial
10 approach, the setting up of the command post, the -- a few
11 concerns you have. Is there anything else that you think that I
12 should know about that I didn't ask?

13 LT. RABIN: We've had a few discussions here in the
14 department of things that we've identified since yesterday that we
15 can do better here as far as preplanning an incident -- not
16 necessarily a mass casualty incident or a train versus truck. It
17 can just be a regular old car over here; a drunk rolls their car
18 over and needs to be transferred by helicopter.

19 One of the things that I mentioned to the assistant chief who
20 was with me this morning is we need to go out and identify certain
21 areas and have them documented and be familiar with landing zones,
22 places that, if all else fails and we can't immediately identify a
23 landing zone, we could say, go to Landing Zone 2. And we know
24 we're in close proximity to Landing Zone 2 -- and there may be a
25 better one closer, but initially we can get the helicopter headed

1 to Landing Zone 2 and then we can adjust from that as necessary.

2 That was something that I think that could be improved upon
3 because there was some confusion about landing zone yesterday, at
4 least in my mind it was.

5 MR. LOACH: It's a lot more problematic at night, obviously,
6 you know, stumbling around in the middle of the night, trying to
7 find the flat field in a rural area.

8 MS. HARLEY: Right.

9 LT. RABIN: Right. Because I initially thought, from where I
10 was standing, there with landing zone a hundred yards away. It
11 would have required me to go down there with some help and move a
12 basketball hoop that was laying on the ground. But I'm from a Air
13 Force background, a combat thing, in a combat mode. When I get
14 into a situation like this, I start going, could a helicopter land
15 there?

16 Well, yes, a helicopter could land there if they wanted to.
17 I wasn't in Vietnam or anything, so, you know, I've watched films.
18 There was a place a helicopter could have landed a hundred yards
19 away. You know, I mentioned it to one of the other guys and they
20 kind of looked at me like I was crazy, like the helicopter's never
21 going to land there.

22 But then we identified this other field subsequently. And it
23 all worked out fine, but it could have better, I think. I mean,
24 that field where they landed yesterday could have already been
25 identified as Landing Zone 1. And if we had done that, I would

1 know that landing zone was there. I couldn't see the landing zone
2 from where I was on my side of the train, so I was asking people
3 who are more familiar about, you know, who has a flat pasture
4 around here --

5 MS. HARLEY: Right.

6 LT. RABIN: -- where there was a landing zone. And I wasn't
7 aware that it was right there.

8 So I think, I mean, there's a lot of things that we could
9 preplan better. But that's something I think we work with the
10 Pegasus folks -- and they may have already done that. I don't
11 know. We have not spent time working with Pegasus or talking to
12 the Pegasus folks since I've been here.

13 MS. HARLEY: So are your medivac helicopters assigned to the
14 hospitals?

15 LT. RABIN: Yes.

16 MR. LOACH: Yes. Yeah.

17 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So Pegasus, is that assigned to UVA?

18 MR. LOACH: That's a UVA helicopter. And they have backup
19 from -- I think that if you -- you can speak with them, but I
20 think they have a backup, that Pegasus will carry one patient. So
21 -- but I think they do have a backup helicopter.

22 LT. RABIN: There is another -- the chiefs can probably tell
23 you better than I can -- there is another helicopter, medical
24 helicopter --

25 MR. LOACH: Life-something or other.

1 LT. RABIN: Lifeline or something.

2 MR. LOACH: Yeah, Lifeline, probably. But you were talking
3 about things could be done better is, if you think about it,
4 yesterday, if you go down to that site and you look at the grade,
5 getting -- I don't know how you can manage it, but, boy, getting a
6 stretcher off of those cars would have been a horrendous effort
7 and would have required more people -- say there was a mass
8 casualty. The amount of people to get those people off that train
9 on stretchers --

10 LT. RABIN: You're talking about before they came back to
11 the --

12 MR. LOACH: Down the grade.

13 LT. RABIN: -- crossing?

14 MR. LOACH: Before they got to the crossing.

15 LT. RABIN: I mean, it was even hard at the crossing because
16 there's a platform there. You're going from the ground --

17 MR. LOACH: Now, I don't know if you could engineer
18 something; you know what I mean? But I can see in a mass -- say
19 there was mass casualty, getting people off of that train would
20 have been damn near impossible, you know? I mean, I don't know
21 because I don't know, you know, if the --

22 LT. RABIN: I mean, like an airplane has a slide --

23 MS. HARLEY: Right.

24 LT. RABIN: -- for rapid evacuation, primarily, but --

25 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

1 LT. RABIN: But people have to be capable of jumping onto the
2 slide to get off. But I don't know if a train has any type of
3 fast --

4 MR. LOACH: I think it would be interesting to know if what
5 the -- you know, if you can even get a stretcher or do you have to
6 bring all backboards onto the train because of the, you know, the
7 distance, the width of the aisles. You can't get a stretcher, so
8 it would have to be all backboards.

9 I don't even know if the backboard distance is -- I'm just
10 thinking about it now -- how thick -- how wide the backboard are
11 versus how wide the aisles are. And then any room to maneuver the
12 -- you know, how do you get the patient onto the damn backboard in
13 the aisle.

14 MS. HARLEY: Well, you know, this is one of the things we're
15 looking at because the issue is, is it at that particular point
16 something that the county or the railroad could do as far as
17 trying to help you out by doing something with the grade, leveling
18 it off a little bit on either side of the track so that in the
19 event that you do have a train that's there and you do have to
20 evacuate people out a window on a backboard, that it's something
21 that's doable without putting the rescuers at risk.

22 LT. RABIN: If they had to -- if they had to get off that
23 train fast, there would have been a lot of injuries coming off
24 that grade.

25 MR. LOACH: Yeah, and in an ideal world, you could do that.

1 But in the real world, they're not -- the train company or whoever
2 owns the tracks, they're not going to purchase the land to grade
3 that out. You know, just -- it's not going to happen.

4 MS. HARLEY: Well, actually, they're responsible for the
5 property on both sides of their track to a certain extent. But,
6 again, this one's -- I am just now figuring out the lay of the
7 land.

8 LT. RABIN: Well, let's walk right here. Just walk right --
9 through this window here.

10 MS. HARLEY: Buckingham Branch as opposed to CSX.

11 LT. RABIN: And that's the train tracks right there.

12 (Off microphone conversation.)

13 LT. RABIN: It did (indiscernible).

14 MS. HARLEY: Maybe the monitoring.

15 LT. RABIN: Yeah.

16 MS. HARLEY: Yes, certainly. I do --

17 LT. RABIN: Well, just on the train there either.

18 MS. HARLEY: Yes, I do actually see that.

19 LT. RABIN: But, you know, I don't know what -- there's no
20 solution to that, in my opinion.

21 MS. HARLEY: But one of the --

22 LT. RABIN: I mean, there's a solution to it.

23 MS. HARLEY: Right.

24 LT. RABIN: But the cost is going to be so astronomical.

25 MS. HARLEY: So one of the things that I that I think is

1 that, number one, there has to be more communications between the
2 first responders and the railroad as far as training.

3 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

4 MS. HARLEY: And also, just being able talk about, you know,
5 railroad, what do we do with that?

6 LT. RABIN: Right.

7 MS. HARLEY: Give us an idea --

8 LT. RABIN: Sure.

9 MS. HARLEY: -- or a suggestion how we combat that.

10 MR. LOACH: Does the railroad have -- in other words, I don't
11 know how the call came in, but did the call come in from the
12 railroad? Can they talk with ECC?

13 MS. HARLEY: The railroads are supposed to be able to. I
14 have not talked to railroad communications yet.

15 MR. LOACH: Yeah, I'm just wondering --

16 MS. HARLEY: Normally what happens is is that the train crew
17 calls it in to the dispatcher. The dispatcher is whoever is
18 controlling that track.

19 MR. LOACH: Right.

20 MS. HARLEY: That dispatcher can be 12 states away if it's
21 their track. And then that dispatcher normally notifies. Okay.
22 A lot of times it happens in reverse. People get on cell phones,
23 and it's actually faster to go to a local 911. And then it ends
24 up that local 911 actually contacts the railroad.

25 One of the issues that we have is is that, number one, safety

1 -- your safety, you have to be able to know how you operate on
2 that track, how to stop those trains and what's the best way of
3 doing it. For example, has anybody ever told you that there's a
4 blue plaque here with a number on it? That blue plaque, that is
5 required by law to be there, is -- gives you a number to call. If
6 there's any time there's an incident or you are on that track for
7 any reason that you have some operation going, you call that
8 number and that takes you directly to the train dispatcher. It
9 also helps you identify where you are so you don't have to sit
10 there and look around and try to figure out roads.

11 LT. RABIN: That plaque is located at the crossing?

12 MS. HARLEY: At the crossing. It's a blue plaque. And they
13 are required --

14 LT. RABIN: The only training that we've had is hazmat
15 awareness type training.

16 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

17 LT. RABIN: And that's reading the placards on individual
18 cars that would be carrying whatever they're carrying and trying
19 to figure out what kind of hazardous materials that they're
20 carrying and how to deal with that.

21 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

22 LT. RABIN: We haven't had any training on passenger train --

23 MR. LOACH: No.

24 LT. RABIN: -- operations or general railroad operations.

25 MS. HARLEY: So and -- let's see.

1 LT. RABIN: We do that with a former lifetime member here --
2 well, he's current lifetime member, but a lifetime member who's no
3 longer active who is a retired railroad engineer. He was here
4 yesterday talking to us about some of the dangers associated with
5 trains. And he was talking about high voltage and so on and so
6 forth. And I had no idea.

7 MR. LOACH: Me neither.

8 LT. RABIN: And I asked him if he would be willing to come in
9 and talk to us, you know, just in a casual setting, to give us a
10 little information on trains. And he was talking about things
11 like if you need to get on the train, how do you get the door open
12 from the outside. He says there's a special key you have -- have
13 to have to open the door. Well, we don't have that here, that I'm
14 aware of.

15 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

16 LT. RABIN: He says it's a big, long key anyway. He's
17 supposedly going to put together something for us. And I spoke to
18 our training officer yesterday about it.

19 MS. HARLEY: Yeah. So speaking about the train, the train
20 was running when you got to the scene, you got on the scene?

21 LT. RABIN: You mean the engine running?

22 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

23 LT. RABIN: The idle?

24 MS. HARLEY: Yeah, the locomotive. Do you know if it was
25 running?

1 MR. LOACH: I'm trying to think if there was lights, but I
2 don't know. I don't -- no, I just don't know.

3 LT. RABIN: I wasn't really paying attention.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay, do you -- well, here's a question. When
5 you walked into the train, could you see?

6 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

7 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So it seemed to be well-lit at that
8 particular point --

9 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

10 MS. HARLEY: -- whether by ambient light or there wasn't --

11 MR. LOACH: Yeah, I think there must have been lights because
12 there was one doc who was in a -- was in one of the restrooms and
13 he was watching his hands, and I think there was a light on.

14 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

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22 [REDACTED]

23 LT. RABIN: So, I mean, I don't know that stuff. You can
24 investigate it. I don't know that it happened.

25 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

1 LT. RABIN: I'm just saying that I heard that there.

2 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right. Well, thank you very much.
3 What I always tell people is, you think about something later on,
4 even if it you think it's something small, please let me know.
5 Again, any concerns, any kind issues, anything to do with safety
6 or how to do -- how you can do your job better in that situation.

7 Certainly one of the questions is, does the railroad provide
8 you with enough training, with the ability to not only know what
9 to do in the event of an issue with one of their trains, but
10 actually gives you the opportunity you put hands on to -- what I
11 would call play with the trains, so you know what you're looking
12 at, so that when there's an incident you know exactly what you're
13 supposed to do and how to do it.

14 The other thing that concerns me is, is that no one seems to
15 know that there's an emergency blue placard on every single grade
16 crossing which helps identify where you are and who to call
17 immediately. And that's something that should be done because a
18 lot of times what will happen is that if you're -- if ECC -- well,
19 here it's a little bit different. But if ECC wasn't quite sure
20 who to contact and they're calling around trying to find the right
21 railroad, you guys are on that track, someone needs to make sure
22 that those trains are stopped. And if -- and especially when you
23 are on a track somewhere and you give someone a street name and
24 the railroad is located six states away and they're trying to
25 figure out where you are. So I think that certainly is a big

1 issue.

2 I will say -- now we'll talk to your chief to see if he
3 doesn't have any heartburn about it. I do actually have -- the
4 Federal Railroad Administration had actually found that this was
5 an issue and this was a problem with first responders and they
6 actually had -- came up with a program for first responders about
7 dealing with trains, how to turn trains off, how to deal with the
8 train emergency, what those blue signs are and everything else.
9 And it's a DVD, and I have no problem with sending a bunch of them
10 up here.

11 LT. RABIN: That would be great.

12 MR. LOACH: Yeah.

13 MS. HARLEY: So --

14 LT. RABIN: We actually had --

15 MS. HARLEY: And it'll give you some -- it'll start you off.
16 But ultimately, in the end, the railroad is responsible for making
17 sure that you guys have the training. It's their train, but
18 they're responsible to make sure that if something happens on
19 their train, that the rescuers can do their job. So that's my
20 soapbox.

21 Thank you very much. I appreciate --

22 LT. RABIN: Thank you.

23 MR. LOACH: You're welcome.

24 MS. HARLEY: I took a whole hour and 10 minutes of your time.
25 And so, it's 4:16. I appreciate it. And, again, as I said, what --

1 if you can speak to the other guys and just give me a call and let
2 me know when they're going to be available. I don't want to --

3 LT. RABIN: Okay.

4 MS. HARLEY: -- at the last minute, try to drag people away
5 from their homes and what they're doing. I can do this on their
6 time. Okay?

7 LT. RABIN: Okay. Why don't I give you at least the
8 individuals who are on my engine --

9 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

10 LT. RABIN: -- give you their phone numbers.

11 MS. HARLEY: If that's not going to be a problem with them,
12 absolutely.

13 LT. RABIN: No, it's -- I mean, it's official business.

14 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Gotcha.

15 LT. RABIN: So --

16 (Whereupon, at 4:16 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

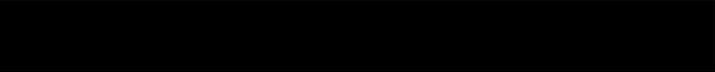
IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION OF AMTRAK SPECIAL TRAIN
P0923 31 AT THE HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
CROSSING AT LANETOWN ROAD IN
CROZET, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 2018
Interview of Lt. Mike Rabin and
Firefighter Tom Roach

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY18MH005

PLACE: Crozet, Virginia

DATE: February 1, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Kimberlee S. Kondrat
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

COLLISION OF AMTRAK SPECIAL TRAIN *

P0923 31 AT THE HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE * Accident No.: HWY18MH005

CROSSING AT LANETOWN ROAD IN *

CROZET, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 2018 *

* * * * *

Interview of: FIREFIGHTERS JUSTIN IDE, WILL SCHMERTZLER,
and RODNEY RICH, JR.

Crozet Volunteer Fire Department
5652 Three Notched Road
Crozet, Virginia

Friday,
February 2, 2018

APPEARANCES:

SHERYL HARLEY, Highway Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(6:25 p.m.)

1
2
3 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So today is Friday, February 2, 20108.
4 It is 6:25 p.m. and this is the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department
5 located at 5652 Three Notched Road in Crozet, Virginia.

6 MS. HARLEY: Here with me is Justin and I want to make sure I
7 spelled your last name right.

8 MR. IDE: Last name is Ide, I-D-E.

9 MS. HARLEY: I-D-E, and?

10 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Will.

11 MS. HARLEY: Will.

12 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Last name is S-C-H-M-E-R-T-Z-L-E-R.

13 MS. HARLEY: Schmertzler?

14 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Schmertzler.

15 MS. HARLEY: Schmertzler.

16 MR. SCHMERTZLER: You're close.

17 MS. HARLEY: I'm sorry. Okay. And once again, I'm Sheryl
18 Harley. I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board and, of
19 course, you know we are investigating the train crash that
20 occurred on the 31st.

21 So let me explain why I'm here. Part of our investigation,
22 and what I'm looking into, is what we call Survival Factors.
23 Survival Factors deals with, Number 1, what happened to the
24 occupants of a vehicle during a crash, what hurt them, and is it
25 possible that we can make recommendations, for example,

1 engineering or more regulation to keep them safer? What we're
2 looking at is either mitigating the injury or preventing them from
3 being killed. Okay?

4 To do that, one of the things that we look to are the people
5 that we ask are the first responders. You were there first. You
6 saw it as it was happening, you noticed things that later on we're
7 not going to be able to see just by looking at a vehicle or a
8 photograph.

9 One of the things that I'm looking to you to talk about is
10 things like how you responded there, what you saw when you got
11 there? Did you have any difficulties? Is there anything you
12 think could have made it go a lot easier? Is there something that
13 you would like to see in the future to make your job easier so
14 that you can ultimately serve them better -- the victims in the
15 crash?

16 So that's basically what we look at and we look at it from
17 all sides. We do the fire department, we do the police
18 department, we even look at the hospitals where the patients go.
19 Did they go to the right hospital? What kind of care they
20 receive? Did it make any difference as far as how they were
21 injured or how long they stayed in the hospital? So that's
22 basically what I'm looking at.

23 So what I would like is, if you don't mind, if you could
24 start from when you got the call and then just walk me through
25 what you saw and what you did, and anything -- and especially

1 anything that either bothered you or you thought was a little odd,
2 a little strange, or something that you believed was out of place?
3 Make sense?

4 MR. IDE: Yeah.

5 MS. HARLEY: So, I guess with whoever wants to start, tell me
6 about the call.

7 INTERVIEW OF JUSTIN IDE

8 MR. IDE: I was on my way to the firehouse here, in my
9 personal vehicle to meet up with who ended up being the Officer
10 Mike Rabin. When the tones dropped, I was only five or 600 yards
11 from here. So I got here relatively quick. The only thing I
12 heard on the tone was a truck versus a train. I didn't look at my
13 phone, I didn't look at anything else, so our CAD system sends us
14 information. I didn't have any of the information. I didn't know
15 it was a congressional train. I didn't know that there were VIPs
16 on the train.

17 I bunkered up and Will arrived slightly after I did. Rodney
18 was the driver, he was already here, and Mike Rabin was already
19 here. They were both already in the truck and so we got out
20 relatively quickly. When we rolled up on scene, we knew where it
21 was. We're familiar with the location. When we rolled up on
22 scene and I jumped out, the first thing I did is went to grab
23 extrication equipment and then I was told, "Hold off on the
24 extrication equipment, we'll find out what exactly they need
25 before walking down there."

1 The first thing to say out of place, or different, that I
2 noticed was that there were guys dressed in black with police, you
3 know, and with long weapons. And that was, for me was it was out
4 of place and it was strange because I didn't know who they were.
5 I mean, it said police so, but they weren't aggressive. They
6 didn't, not a single one of them talked to me or said anything,
7 but, it was obviously a different situation at that point.

8 I then made it down to right by the truck to see that they
9 had two patients on the ground. An ambulance was already on scene
10 and I think they had already moved the third patient into one of
11 the ambulances, the guy who was the least injured was already, I
12 think, in the ambulance. I didn't really see him until much later
13 in the operation.

14 And Victim 1, who was, who ended up being the DOA, there was
15 a guy doing chest compressions on him. And I could see the other
16 victim, they were trying to work on him but -- so I went to the
17 guy doing chest compressions and I asked him if I could, count me
18 in and we'd swap off. It was an older gentleman who then I found
19 out was a Tennessee congressman at that point who said he was
20 previously a doctor.

21 I started chest compressions. We typically don't do chest
22 compressions and such on a trauma code but we also, when we do a
23 trauma code, or when we do start trauma, or chest compressions,
24 then you don't stop until it's been called. So I probably did,
25 swapping off with him, probably did four or five rounds of chest

1 compressions. At one point a nurse, a woman walked up and said,
2 "I'm a nurse, how can I help?" I don't think she did chest
3 compressions or anything. We put pads on the deceased and they
4 checked for a rhythm and everything else.

5 At one point I called for a WARS, which is a Western
6 Albemarle Rescue Squad person to come read the monitor because the
7 doctors that were with me, the congressional doctors, people, they
8 didn't really -- I didn't feel like they really understood the
9 monitor and probably been a long time since they'd seen a monitor,
10 so.

11 Then once it was determined that there was, had been no heart
12 rate, no pulse, no anything for the whole time that I had been on
13 the scene and the person, a doctor called it. By that time a
14 second or third rescue unit came up and they said, "Okay, we need
15 to focus on this other person." So it was a second victim and I
16 got up and I said, "What can I do?" Someone was holding the
17 person's legs up, said, "We need to get blankets for him to treat
18 for shock."

19 I ran up to our engine, I first ran up to the ambulance and
20 there was no blankets available so I went to our engine. I knew
21 we had blankets on our engine. I came back with two blankets for
22 the engine -- from the engine. We wrapped him and they were at
23 that point trying to get an airway. They tried to get an advanced
24 airway and weren't really successful. He was a bit combative. He
25 was gargling and combative, a lot of blood, so they called for

1 suction.

2 In the meantime they were putting in an oral airway, purple
3 oral airway and I then ran to Engine 151, which had pulled up
4 intermittently at some point there, and I took the suction off
5 theirs, their engine, brought it over, handed it to -- it wasn't a
6 WARS woman, I'm not sure who it was. I think it was a person that
7 was on the train or something but she was at the head and managing
8 care. I handed it to her and helped get that started and then,
9 you know, she was doing suction on him.

10 At that point I stepped back a little bit to assess the
11 situation, was told by Mike Rabin, our officer, that there was a
12 small hydraulic leak from the back of the trash compactor part of
13 the truck. So I was assigned to go bring Stay-Dri over there and
14 try and contain that leak a little bit.

15 That's primarily all I did on scene. And then at that point,
16 when I got back from doing that, they were loading Patient 2 onto
17 a backboard and tying him down with the straps. In the middle of
18 all that, I think Will had pulled a line. There was a line on the
19 ground and at one point -- because I kicked it and there was foam
20 all over the place because I accidentally kicked the nozzle.

21 Then I followed them, I helped lift up and the backboard,
22 there were more than enough people, but I helped lift up and carry
23 the oxygen that was attached to the person and then backed off a
24 little bit. I actually did take a photo of it because there was
25 more than enough people there but then as we crossed the tracks

1 and went up the hill, the last person on the left side as they
2 were going up, he was carry both the oxygen and the AD. We
3 swapped off, both of us, I think he was an Indian man. He looked
4 like he was probably part of the security detail because he had an
5 earpiece and a pin. We swapped off with the AD and the oxygen and
6 we followed that down to -- until the patient got into Ambulance
7 112.

8 Q. Ambulance 112?

9 A. Medic 112, pretty sure it was 112.

10 Q. Okay, so, I'm guessing I'm going to start with you. When you
11 first arrived on the scene, which way do you come up? You came up
12 with Railroad Road up, was that Lanetown?

13 A. Yeah, onto Lanetown, yeah. Up Railroad and then onto
14 Lanetown and then we parked. The ambulance was already on scene
15 so we parked, we were the -- we ended up being the second vehicle
16 in.

17 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, right there by Dairy Mart.

18 MR. IDE: There was an ambulance in front of us, then us, and
19 then right -- we had passed, we passed the Medic car, 508 or
20 something, which was also there but.

21 BY MS. HARLEY:

22 Q. Who was -- you said the -- where was that ambulance out of?

23 A. Right here in Crozet, Western Albemarle Rescue Squad, WARS we
24 call it, but it's like just down at the four-way.

25 MR. RICH: Yeah, it's four-tenths of a mile down.

1 MR. IDE: It was previously -- it's housing, what was
2 previously the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department now but that's
3 their headquarters. So they're probably -- they've got a, you
4 know --

5 MR. RICH: Four-tenths of a mile.

6 MR. IDE: Yeah, a jump on us from here.

7 MS. HARLEY: I'm sorry, sir, you are?

8 MR. RICH: Rodney Rich.

9 MS. HARLEY: Hi, Rodney, how are you?

10 MR. RICH: Doing good.

11 MS. HARLEY: I'm Sheryl Harley. You missed my big opening
12 spiel; it was beautiful.

13 MR. RICH: I'm sorry about that.

14 MS. HARLEY: I'll get around to you in a second there,
15 Rodney.

16 BY MS. HARLEY:

17 Q. So a couple of things, when you first got on the scene,
18 Justin, did you see the truck, the actual truck, the trash truck?

19 A. Yeah, I mean, the trash truck you could see was right up by
20 the berm of where the crossing is.

21 Q. So the train was not obstructing your view to see the truck?

22 A. No, you could see the cab of the truck because the cab and
23 the part were just disassociated from each other. They were
24 disconnected from each other for quite some distance.

25 I couldn't see the back of the truck and I didn't see all the

1 litter all around but you could see from our vantage point on the
2 engine, actually at one point when I was told, "Wait, don't, don't
3 bring the extrication equipment down there, let's find out what
4 they need first," I took a photo. In that photo you can clearly
5 see -- you can see the cab of the truck but you can see the train
6 but.

7 Q. Did you take the photo with a camera or on your phone?

8 A. Phone.

9 Q. Is it possible for you to email that to me?

10 A. Yeah, I already talked to the blonde-haired woman, or gray-
11 haired woman.

12 Q. Yeah, oh, you talked to Georgetta from the Rail?

13 A. Yeah, I gave her my phone number and email and she's supposed
14 to send me, I mean, but, yeah, I can send it to you, too.

15 Q. Yeah, please, if you don't mind?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. So the second thing is you encountered the security detail.
18 No one in the security detail offered any information about what
19 was going on?

20 A. No, not to me.

21 Q. Did they say anything at all about --

22 A. No, not a thing. They were focused on a perimeter, you know,
23 and thinking back on it they were focused on their job. They had
24 established a perimeter, they were all, had their backs to the
25 train. They were scanning, you know, they were typically what you

1 would see a security detail doing.

2 I've been around different security details doing stuff and
3 they were doing exactly what they were supposed to do. They
4 weren't instituting care, they weren't doing anything. They were
5 focused on their job, which was, you know, security of the
6 situation. Not a single person asked me for an ID or anything,
7 you know, but they weren't --

8 Q. So when you arrived on the scene and you saw the cab of the
9 truck, were any of the doors of the truck open?

10 A. Yeah, the passenger side door was open. You could see inside
11 there. There was a computer on the baseboard. There was blood on
12 the baseboard. But, yeah, the passenger side door was ripped
13 open. And both patients were out, maybe less than 10 feet from
14 the cab.

15 There was a small leak of what we deemed antifreeze, it had
16 that antifreeze color. There was a drip, drip, drip at one point.
17 Someone was concerned there was a drip coming from the diesel
18 tank. I looked at it and assessed it and felt like it wasn't
19 anything significant, especially knowing about diesel and its
20 flashpoint and that kind of stuff is not going to be a big thing.

21 At a certain point we did grab Stay-Dry and tried to build a
22 little bit of a dike around there because the antifreeze was
23 seeping into the scene of where the two victims were but it wasn't
24 anything serious.

25 Q. Okay, so, let's see, at the time when you arrived, there

1 were, the people who were attending the two victims, you believe
2 were bystanders and also somebody from, and people from the train?

3 A. Yeah, when we arrived there was, there were people from WARS
4 Rescue Squad and then there were people who I couldn't readily
5 identify. I mean, they were -- and when I knelt down, I looked to
6 my left, I knelt down and I looked to my left and I could see that
7 the guy that was doing compressions had a lanyard on and it said
8 Congressional. I couldn't read everything it said but it said
9 Congressional and at that point it clicked into me that, well, he
10 must be, that must be why there's security and whatever. I said
11 to him, "Were you on the train?" And he said, "Yes." He said,
12 "I'm a congressman from Tennessee but I'm also a doctor.

13 And so at that point, it sort of clicked to me who they were
14 but, again, it wasn't, there were WARS rescue people there but
15 then there were people who I couldn't really figure out where they
16 were from because it's sort of a, no a remote place, but there's
17 like, it's not like a downtown shopping mall. There weren't
18 people like just milling around but.

19 Q. And then at that particular point, the woman walked up and --

20 A. Identified herself as a nurse, how can I help? And I don't
21 know where she came from and I didn't really see her do anything
22 but I remember her saying that.

23 Q. Did she identify herself at all?

24 A. She just said a nurse, she didn't give a name.

25 Q. All right, explain to me your protocol, your trauma protocol

1 as far as CPR.

2 A. We don't, a trauma code, you know, you show up to a car
3 accident or something like that, you generally, you're not going
4 to initiate CPR especially if there's obvious signs of no life,
5 which this person had.

6 Q. Explain to me what the obvious signs you saw.

7 A. He was blue, he had facial deformities, blood, and no pulse.
8 You know, no, -- and I felt, I checked for a pulse and there was
9 no pulse. The doctor from Tennessee was, I saw him checking the
10 femoral artery for a pulse and there was no pulse. And at one
11 point during the whole situation, I heard them say -- heard
12 someone say, "You know, he hasn't had a pulse since we got here,
13 you know, he hasn't, I haven't felt a pulse at all."

14 Our department doesn't provide EMS care but I'm a full-time
15 firefighter in a department that does so I'm an EMTB. But our
16 department generally does not provide EMS care. We're sort of
17 secondary to WARS.

18 Q. You say you work for Waynesborow?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 INTERVIEW OF WILL SCHMERTZLER

21 BY MS. HARLEY:

22 Q. So, Will, tell me what were you thinking about it?

23 A. When we arrived on the scene, basically, I got off, I did not
24 have my gear on. I had to put my gear on immediately right then
25 and just started assessing what the situation was. Basically,

1 Justine and myself went across the tracks, went to the vehicle,
2 and I know just in my mind, I know there was at least 12 to 15
3 people around each victim, at least. I mean, there was just so
4 many people there that was already starting a CPR or some sort of
5 medic treatment right there.

6 That's when we saw the leak and decided to go back, get the
7 Stay-Dry. We ended up getting two bags of Stay Dry plus two
8 buckets and bringing it in there and creating a dike to stop the
9 antifreeze, what we deemed to be the antifreeze, because it was
10 basically going right into the victim that passed.

11 We tried to stop all that and once that was taken care of
12 there was just still so many people there, I basically went back
13 to the truck when the operator of the truck, Rodney, was already
14 pulling a line. I grabbed the line from him because our protocol
15 is whenever there's a wreck and something's leaking we have to
16 have a line on the ground.

17 I basically stood by the line and just sat there and actually
18 took in a lot of what was going on around me. I had an
19 opportunity to just to sit and watch everybody work. It seemed
20 like the whole, considering what we had there and the lack of
21 manpower at first, it came together pretty well, especially once
22 other people started coming into the situation.

23 MR. IDE: Lack of professional or trained manned power.

24 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, just lack of manpower.

25 MR. IDE: There were a lot of bodies, but there weren't

1 necessarily bodies that were supposed to be there or were trained
2 people.

3 BY MS. HARLEY:

4 Q. Give me an estimate, Will, on how long you think it took to
5 get additional manpower there for you to feel that there was
6 enough professional?

7 A. I'd say about 30 minutes.

8 Q. About 30 minutes?

9 A. I would say 30 minutes from the time that we got on the scene
10 and everybody came around. Of course there was a little, knowing
11 the area we had to tell people how to come around the area. Not
12 all come up Jarmans Gap Road to Lanetown --

13 MR. IDE: That was one of the things that I think wasn't
14 necessarily clear and I wasn't listening to the radio truck but
15 whatever but the difficult thing was is that because of where the
16 train was, and it was blocking the crossing. It necessitated a
17 little bit of more communication about with people coming in.

18 I think one of the, you hate to say it, but one of the issues
19 that we had, I think, is that every cop in the world, or every
20 police officer in the world came in their own individual car and
21 just sort of parked it. That became a little bit of a shit show
22 because there were just police cars everywhere blocking egress
23 and --

24 MR. SCHMERTZLER: And that got to be on both sides of the
25 road, on both sides of the track, actually, I noticed because

1 everything's, once we started getting probably about 45 minutes
2 into the scene, most of the municipalities had somebody there, the
3 different organizations had some piece of apparatus there and it
4 just got to be a real block at that point. Nobody could get in,
5 nobody could get out --

6 MR. IDE: To the point where the first, the third victim, the
7 one I never really even saw, I saw him briefly, he was already in
8 the ambulance. The first time I saw him he was in the ambulance
9 was when I ran up, he was in 502, and I ran up to ask them if they
10 had blankets.

11 First I ran up, actually, I ran up twice because I ran up
12 once and said, "Give me a box of gloves," or "Give me gloves."
13 And he started to hand me two gloves, Quentin (ph.). And I was
14 like, "No, give me a box because there's a lot of blood and
15 there's a lot of people down there that don't have gloves."

16 When I get back down there and they said, "Get blankets."
17 That was the first time I saw him then I saw him again and he was
18 still in there but what ended up having to happen is that we had
19 to transfer him from that ambulance because our engine, a rescue
20 truck, and nine different police cars were in the way. We had to
21 transfer him just from that ambulance that he was already in on
22 the stretcher to another ambulance so that he could roll out.

23 MS. HARLEY: Got it, because the ambulance was blocked?

24 MR. IDE: Because the ambulance was blocked and it was, I
25 mean it was blocked to the point where -- and I actually, when I

1 was doing it, I took a picture of that, too. It was blocked to a
2 point where it was very, very blocked.

3 That's us running to, that's us running between ambulances to
4 the other ambulance. That's Medic 5, so that's the third victim
5 who got transported -- Medic 12, I mean, who got transported on
6 the ground to --

7 MS. HARLEY: Tell me what kind of injuries he had.

8 MR. IDE: I didn't really see, although, I heard, but I
9 didn't see. Again, I didn't see him until he was already in the
10 ambulance and he was wrapped up. I heard he had facial problems
11 in his left side of his face and his ear. But he seemed he was
12 the least injured of all three people.

13 BY MS. HARLEY:

14 Q. When you received the call, Will, how far away from the
15 firehouse were you?

16 A. One mile, I live exactly one mile from here and I work out of
17 my home.

18 Q. Approximately how long do you think it took you to respond?

19 A. Probably three and a half minutes, because I think we were
20 out before the second tone and every tone drops in three minutes.

21 Q. You have your first tone and then --

22 A. And then there's three minutes.

23 Q. And then three minutes and then a second tone comes out?

24 A. Yes, Ma'am.

25 MR. IDE: I think we rolled out right at the second tone.

1 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I think we did, too.

2 MR. IDE: Because I felt my pager off as we were rolling out
3 the door.

4 INTERVIEW OF RODNEY RICH, JR.

5 BY MS. HARLEY:

6 Q. Mr. Rodney, right?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. Hi, how are you? What I'm looking for is to you to give me
9 some basic information. What I'm looking for is Number 1, how you
10 responded there? What you saw when you got there? Where there
11 any issues areas that you saw? Where there things that could have
12 gone better? Were there anything that you saw that was kind of
13 out of place, unusual that kind of affected how you actually
14 operated? Or just simply what's, what I'm looking for is
15 ultimately talking about survival.

16 One of the things we look at is Number 1, how was this
17 occupant injured in this vehicle? What in the vehicle injured the
18 person? Is it possible that we can make some changes to that
19 vehicle so that next time something like this happens they either
20 will not be killed, or they won't be injured as severely?

21 Then what we look at is did you encounter any problems when
22 you did anything with extrication. Was there an issue where doors
23 that were supposed to open did not open in the train? Those kind
24 of things are what we're looking for. Because ultimately in the
25 end, we also examine whether or not the structural integrity of

1 the train was as it should be whether and not all of the emergency
2 access points that should have been there actually worked that
3 allowed access. I guess what I want from you is to walk me
4 through it.

5 A. I was already here at the firehouse. I was working on my car
6 when the call came out. I ended up driving the engine in and like
7 they said, we came in off of Railroad Avenue, up Lanetown. Then I
8 positioned so that the pumping panel, so I could see the scene and
9 started opening up the doors, pump the pumping gear. One of the
10 first things we did notice was the truck, just the cab of the
11 truck and I noticed that the arms on the guards were down for the
12 traffic --

13 MR. IDE: I noticed that, too.

14 MR. RICH: -- the back end of the train right there at the
15 crossing. I started to pull the line, handed it off to Will,
16 started grabbing Stay-Dry. We were going to take the extrication
17 equipment down there but we ended up not but I still took a tarp
18 down there just in case. That was the only time I walked down
19 that way was to take a tarp, the blue tarp and --

20 MR. SCHMERTZLER: That was at the point when Rodney handed me
21 the blue tarp and we put the blue tarp over the deceased. He had
22 been called and I remember Rodney taking the tarp out of the bag
23 and handing it to me and then we put that over him.

24 Q. So at that particular point, let's say someone is pronounced
25 on the scene. Does an ambulance transport that person to a

1 hospital and then the medical examiner pick it up from there? Or
2 did a medical examiner come out to the scene?

3 MR. RICH: It's very, very rare unless there is an extended
4 amount of time that the medical examiner cannot come and pick up
5 the body, usually the rescue squad would take it to the morgue at
6 the hospital and they would store it until it can be picked up.
7 Then sometimes it's up to the funeral home.

8 MR. IDE: A lot of times here, it depends on the situation,
9 too. If it's a traffic crash, I think of the guy on, coming down
10 the mountain where the guy swerved and went across and killed that
11 guy. They're there for an extended period of time and so the
12 rescue squad generally is long gone before the police or whoever's
13 doing the accident investigation is on scene.

14 MS. HARLEY: So talk to me about communications then. You
15 guys are on one radio zone. What about West, what about WARS?

16 MR. RICH: Western's on the same radio, --

17 MR. IDE: So we were moving, when we were going there --

18 MR. RICH: -- we were on response.

19 Mr. IDE: We were on response but then as soon as we got
20 there they established a TAC channel.

21 MS. HARLEY: And that was for everyone?

22 MR. RICH: Yes ma'am.

23 MR. IDE: And everyone moves to TAC 3.

24 MR. RICH: It's a monitor TAC channel.

25 MR. SCHMERTZLER: And for some reason command was on TAC 5 --

1 MR. RICH: They had the helicopter on 4.

2 MR. IDE: As it extended, they put the helicopter on TAC 4
3 and then they put trauma/triage or triage on TAC 5. As the
4 situation grew and the brass arrived and things started to expand,
5 just like any ICS thing, as more people came, the expansion came
6 and so then they added channels. Initially we were on TAC 3.

7 MS. HARLEY: Did you guys actually call this as a mass
8 casualty or multi-casualty incident?

9 MR. IDE: No, I think by the time we got there it had already
10 been dispatched.

11 MR. RICH: Yes, but then they upgraded it before we could get
12 on scene.

13 MR. IDE: It had been upgraded by the time we got there.
14 When it first came in it was just a truck versus a train.

15 MR. RICH: I don't remember how it came out.

16 MR. IDE: Yeah, I just know it came in at 11:18, but I can't
17 remember what it -- but then, I don't know if Mike Rabin who was
18 in command initially, I don't know if he called it an MCI, but
19 very quickly.

20 MR. SCHMERTZLER: That's how it came out, just exactly like
21 that.

22 MR. IDE: Very quickly it was called an MCI.

23 MS. HARLEY: But with entrapment, so all the fire department
24 units that showed up, are all on the same frequency?

25 Mr. RICH: Yes.

1 MS. HARLEY: Are you guys capable of being patched in with
2 the police so that you're --

3 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yes, ma'am.

4 MR. IDE: I don't think it happened.

5 MS. HARLEY: Did they do it?

6 MR. SCHMERTZLER: No, ma'am, there wasn't a patch done
7 yesterday.

8 MR. IDE: There was not.

9 Mr. RICH: I think it was, because, I was up by the Command
10 Post 52 because I think it was pertaining to 15's bucket?

11 MR. IDE: Well, it was 10, it was both. They were all there.

12 MR. RICH: Yeah, when he pulled up, he pulled up behind 52
13 and I was actually able to stay right in that area and the police
14 had someone right there.

15 MR. SCHMERTZLER: That's where the command post was
16 established.

17 MR. RICH: Yeah, the Command Post was established. We had
18 representatives from all, right there by the engine so they had a
19 good idea.

20 MR. IDE: That was the Command Post.

21 MS. HARLEY: Command post? Okay. All the representatives
22 were at the Command Post, so there was no need to actually to
23 (indiscernible)?

24 Mr. RICH: Yeah, and shortly after they showed up, 58 got on
25 scene and pulled in behind them. Then the cop cars were started

1 lining up behind them and then 505 from WARS pulled up on the
2 other lane and kind of shut everything down after that.

3 MS. HARLEY: Tell me when Engine 58 was dispatched,
4 approximately.

5 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Probably initially they were on the
6 dispatch --

7 MR. IDE: There were on the same dispatch.

8 MR. SCHMERTZLER: -- they just had to wait until somebody got
9 into the building to get them out opping.

10 MR. IDE: We were on 52.

11 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Maybe the second tone they got out, two and
12 a half, three tones maybe?

13 MR. IDE: Yeah, I'm not sure.

14 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I'm not really sure, to be honest with you,
15 Sheryl.

16 MS. HARLEY: But it was fairly --

17 MR. SCHMERTZLER: But they were fairly quick.

18 Mr. IDE: We had a quick response. I mean, we had four
19 people on the first engine, which is atypical for us. We
20 typically roll with three people and sometimes when we're in bad
21 scenarios we roll with two people on an engine. Three people's
22 our typical dispatch so we had four people and we had four all
23 qualified firefighters with experience.

24 MR. RICH: Yeah, wait, Justine, I work for Augusta County
25 Fire and Rescue.

1 MR. IDE: Will's been here forever.

2 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Not that long.

3 MR. IDE: Almost forever.

4 MS. HARLEY: Forever, that was quite a compliment. Explain
5 to me about how they keep track of you guys. Let's say you have a
6 major scene like this, or a major fire scene. What kind of
7 personnel tracking is done to make sure to keep account of -- not
8 only how many of you guys are there, but who's there?

9 MR. IDE: On every apparatus there's a little Velcro tab and
10 on all of our stuff we have on our helmets we have what we have
11 what we call a pass tag.

12 MS. HARLEY: So you had the pass tags at this point?

13 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yes, ma'am, and basically somebody would
14 come by and pick it up. Somebody in command initiated a safety
15 officer. And the safety officer started coming around and
16 gathering up everybody's pass tags at that point. And then
17 they'll assign you on the board the truck you were on and
18 operator, officer, and what seat you were on.

19 MR. IDE: On the Velcro thing on the thing it says Engine 52,
20 and your pass tag is on there. And I do remember, I think it was
21 Nick --

22 MR. SCHMERTZLER: It was Nick.

23 MR. IDE: -- who came up and said, "Hey, I need your pass
24 tags."

25 MR. RICH: He was the safety officer.

1 MS. HARLEY: Who?

2 MR. RICH: Nick Barrel (ph.).

3 MS. HARLEY: Nick Barrel?

4 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yes, ma'am.

5 MS. HARLEY: Which fire department is he from?

6 MR. SCHMERTZLER: When he runs with us. But he's also a city
7 fighter and he also runs with Western Albemarle.

8 MS. HARLEY: What rank is he?

9 MR. SCHMERTZLER: He's a paramedic.

10 MS. HARLEY: He's a paramedic?

11 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah.

12 MR. IDE: But with us, he's simply a firefighter because we
13 don't do a medicare, but he's a paramedic. And actually, he ended
14 up some point he was, because when they transferred the guy that
15 they flew, Nick ended up -- I know he was in initially 503, which
16 was the engine that we transferred him to first. Then they
17 brought him from 503 to the helicopter.

18 So, at that point, and it's funny because, yeah, all these
19 things you don't remember or don't think about. So then at one
20 point, we had transferred, I had walked with the patient to 503,
21 Nick was in there and he was trying to stabilize him and establish
22 a better airway, I think.

23 I walked back to the cab and I heard on the radio that Nick
24 saying that he was looking for the Pegasus crew, which is the
25 helicopter crew. And I said on the radio, "Pegasus has landed,

1 it's at your 3 o'clock," because that's where it was based on
2 where he was. And he responded and said, "Get them to 503."

3 So at that point I started walking from the cab back towards
4 503 and I ran into the three people from Pegasus right at the nose
5 of the butt end of the train, because they were going towards the
6 cab. I said, "No, let's go this way, this is where we need to
7 go." Then I escorted them back to 503.

8 I happen to work previously for the company that does the
9 helicopter so I knew two of the three people there by first name
10 and whatever, Gerard (ph.), and I can't remember the other guy's
11 name. I met them at the butt end of the train, they were coming
12 from the helicopter looking for where they needed to go, and then
13 I escorted them up to 503. They initiated a transfer of care and
14 then I left and walked back.

15 MS. HARLEY: Tell me about training here. You've got various
16 training, you have various stations that do various specialties.
17 This one's a firehouse, WARS does the ambulance and the medical
18 things. Do you guys train together?

19 MR. SCHMERTZLER: We do.

20 MR. IDE: We do.

21 MR. RICH: Yes.

22 Mr. SCHMERTZLER: We both do extrications, so we train a lot
23 in extrication together. Not so much in the medical end of it,
24 but they've got a new rescue squad up there, squad truck and so
25 they invited us up. They brought it down here and let guys go

1 over it. We'll do things like that but when it comes to the
2 medical we don't train whatsoever really together. We'll provide
3 them a driver and CPR. And that basically what we'll do.

4 MR. RICH: Help with CPR is just compressions that we do.

5 MR. IDE: But it's a small place so we know all them, we know
6 them well and a lot of them, as Nick or whoever, they've cross-
7 pollinated. Nick started here at the fire department, I think and
8 then went to WARS and whatever. We run a lot of things on the
9 interstate with them.

10 MS. HARLEY: Has anyone here ever received training in train
11 derailments or any kind of familiarization course involving train
12 derailment?

13 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Done heavy trucks, buses, things like that
14 but never a train.

15 MR. RICH: I haven't done a train yet.

16 MS. HARLEY: Just to let you know, one of the things that is
17 actually something that the railroads are required to do is to
18 provide training for you guys in regards to safety and
19 familiarization with their equipment and what to do if you respond
20 there. Things like how to shut the train down if you have to shut
21 it off. You should know how to shut the train down. You should
22 know how to operate around a train safely.

23 MR. RICH: Later that day Bill Tomblin (ph.) showed up and we
24 were actually discussing about that with him. He used to work for
25 Amtrak.

1 MR. IDE: I'm sure we'll be going in that direction now.

2 MS. HARLEY: One of the things that we've brought that up to
3 the railroad and I think they're moving forward but also I did
4 tell your chief to let you know that the Federal Railroad
5 Administration realizes there was some gaps in the training so
6 they actually came up with actually a CD, a DVD for -- it's made
7 specifically for firemen and police officers to tell you, to give
8 you some kind of familiarization. It's how to operate safely
9 around trains, how to turn off a train if you have to turn it off,
10 if you have to extricate the crew, how to extricate them if
11 they're unable to talk to you. It gives you things like the
12 locomotives are usually diesel/electric, which means it's an
13 electric hazard.

14 RODNEY RICH: Like 40 volt.

15 MS. HARLEY: Right, you should know exactly what's going to
16 happen and that kind of situation. I'm going to send to you but
17 don't be surprised if the local railroad will start reaching out
18 to people and start offering that kind of training. The other
19 thing is that we've also suggested that they need to start doing
20 it also with law enforcement as well. The training is not only
21 classroom kind of thing but also hands on. You get to go out and
22 play with trains.

23 That was one of the takeaways from the train that blew up in
24 Canada, derailed and then several of the railcars blew up and
25 decimated a large portion of the town and burned for days.

1 Unfortunately, the fire department there knew nothing about trains
2 because no one had ever told them how to operate around trains.
3 That was one of the things that we were looking at. Let me ask
4 you a question. If you pulled up to that crossing right now and
5 there was a car stuck on that crossing, do you know how to get in
6 touch with the railroad?

7 MR. RICH: We would call 9-1-1 and go direct through them.

8 MR. IDE: Yeah, we'd call ECC or 9-1-1 if we were like up
9 here at the lumber yard.

10 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, right up here at lumber yard, there
11 used to be a lumber yard right in the middle of town? This bottom
12 crossing was open for many, many years. I mean, there was many a
13 nights we would get calls for tractor trailers coming across that
14 thing and their landing gear would get stuck. It's kind of like
15 this crossing?

16 MS. MARLEY: It's a hump? Yes.

17 MR. SCHMERTZLER: So they would come over and boom, they
18 would stuck, so we get to call through somebody, whoever reported
19 it, and then we'd tell the 9-1-1 center to shut the traffic down
20 right now. Then we'd go over to the lumber yard, get a couple
21 forklifts out, get the guy off the tracks at that point, get a
22 representative out from the train company. Sometimes it was CSX
23 way back when, I think now it's Buckingham Branch.

24 MR. IDE: Told you he's been here forever.

25 MS. HARLEY: Here's the thing, and this is another thing that

1 one of the reasons that the railroad training is very, very
2 important. There is a sign posted right there at that crossing
3 that gives you a phone number that puts you directly to the
4 dispatcher. You talk to the person who's in control of that
5 track. And it also helps identify where you are so sometimes
6 because, probably not here, but in some remote areas, for example,
7 BNSF, whose dispatchers are in Texas, are responsible for tracks
8 that are in the state of Washington.

9 So you're talking to a dispatcher and you're giving them the
10 name of a street and they're six states away. The sign will
11 actually tell you -- it's a big blue sign. It'll actually tell
12 you what the number is and if there's ever a problem on a railroad
13 track, instead of going through 9-1-1 and going through a
14 dispatcher and looking around, there's a number there that will
15 literally ring right to the dispatcher who's controlling that
16 track and every train on it.

17 MR. IDE: That's good to know.

18 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I did not know that.

19 MS. HARLEY: That's one of the things the railroad is
20 supposed to be teaching you and teaching everyone. It's not just
21 the first responders. Everyone should know if something happens
22 on the tracks, instead of calling 9-1-1 and waiting for people to
23 figure out whose track it is and where you are, there's a number
24 right there.

25 That's also something that I suggest you tell all your

1 friends, all your neighbors, whatever. Go take a look up there,
2 it's that big giant blue sign and they're required by law.

3 MS. HARLEY: The other question is, to anybody's knowledge,
4 has there ever been an issue with that crossing? Have you ever
5 had anything like this before, where whether it was a fatality, or
6 property damage, where there was an issue with the train hitting
7 anything at that crossing?

8 MR. IDE: I've only been here five years. I have no
9 knowledge whatsoever

10 MR. RICH: Not at that crossing.

11 Mr. SCHMERTZLER: We had an incident down below that crossing
12 where there was a, to be quite blunt, a naked lady stuck up
13 underneath the train.

14 MS. HARLEY: You don't see that every day.

15 Mr. SCHMERTZLER: She was alive.

16 MR. RICH: She lived.

17 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I really don't know what happened but
18 that's probably, Sheryl, is eighth of a mile below that something
19 like that back towards Crozet.

20 MR. IDE: We had that guy killed here right behind, we had a
21 guy killed a couple of years ago back here.

22 MR. RICH: The woman's head there at Wendell (ph.).

23 MR. SCHMERTZLER: That's been 20 some years ago.

24 MS. HARLEY: Were all those pedestrians?

25 MR. RICH: Yeah, They're the Mountainside Senior Living

1 Center's right here and years ago when the lumber yard was open, I
2 guess that was just the easiest way for them to get across and
3 they would come right across the tracks, you know, 70 to 80 years
4 old. Amtrak does come awfully fast through here.

5 MS. HARLEY: Last question, out of curiosity, do you guys
6 normally get any kind of warning or, and maybe it's something I
7 should ask your chief officers. Do you guys actually get any kind
8 of notice that these kind of special trains are coming through
9 with --

10 MR. RICH: None.

11 Mr. SCHMERTZLER: The only kind of notice that we could get
12 now that we put it together was the driver, or the license check,
13 whatever you want to call it, there the day before the train came
14 through. There was 10 or 12 police cars there, state patrol,
15 sheriff, county. They were all right there doing a license check,
16 right in that same area.

17 Now I can't think it was at the tracks but they said Lanetown
18 Road at the tracks area. So that's all I know, Sheryl, I never
19 did, wouldn't go up there, or anything, but they said they were
20 there for probably a good 2 and 1/2, 3 hours.

21 MR. IDE: I didn't hear that.

22 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, that was the day (indiscernible)
23 there was (indiscernible) all over the place. Emails were going
24 out.

25 MS. HARLEY: This is going to be hard, I want you to, if you

1 can, identify the fire departments that were there on the scene.

2 So we'll start with Crozet.

3 MR. RICH: Yes ma'am.

4 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Albemarle County.

5 MR. IDE: Albemarle County Fire Rescue, which encompasses
6 Earlysville was there. I saw an Earlysville ambulance.

7 MR. RICH: Ivy.

8 MS. HARLEY: Earlysville?

9 MR. RICH: Yes, ma'am.

10 MR. IDE: I saw an ambulance from Earlysville.

11 MR. RICH: Hollymead.

12 Mr. IDE: Ambulance from Hollymead.

13 MS. HARLEY: Hollymead? Where's --

14 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Hollymead's north, north on 29 up
15 Charlottesville, but that's by the airport.

16 MR. IDE: That falls under Albemarle Country Fire Rescue.

17 MR. RICH: All that does.

18 MR. IDE: Ivy Fire Rescue. We've got Charlottesville City,
19 Engine 51. We had Charlottesville City.

20 MR. RICH: Charlottesville Albemarle Rescue Squad.

21 MR. SCHMERTZLER: We had CARS there.

22 MS. HARLEY: So Charlottesville City and Charlottesville
23 Albemarle Rescue Squad are different?

24 MR. RICH: Yes, ma'am they are.

25 MR. IDE: They're the EMS providers for the city of

1 Charlottesville. That's it, I think. That's a lot, but that's it.

2 MR. RICH: Because there's multiple units for --

3 MR. IDE: North Garden?

4 MR. RICH: Never got there.

5 MR. IDE: No, I don't think so.

6 MR. SCHMERTZLER: No, I don't think North Garden was there
7 and that would be the next closest thing.

8 MR. RICH: Yeah, that was about it because there was a lot of
9 CARS units because they sent a couple.

10 MS. HARLEY: The helicopter Pegasus? That's out of the
11 hospital?

12 MR. IDE: UVA.

13 MR. RICH: UVA, yes.

14 MR. IDE: And I also heard Pegasus Ground Markup?

15 MR. RICH: Yes, they was (indiscernible) --

16 MR. IDE: Pegasus, so that's the ambulance from UVA. I know
17 they marked up, but I don't know if they transported. I don't know
18 if they transported or whatever.

19 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I don't think they did.

20 MR. IDE: But I know they were dispatched and they were here.

21 MR. RICH: Because they left a little later.

22 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I remember hearing Pegasus Group call for
23 their ground crew.

24 MS. HARLEY: So Pegasus is out of UVA?

25 MR. IDE: Yes.

1 MS. HARLEY: How were they dispatched? Do you guys dispatch
2 them?

3 MR. SCHMERTZLER: No, ma'am, it was probably because of the
4 incident, it was automatic.

5 MR. IDE: It was automatic dispatch.

6 MR. RICH: Yeah, that's a lot of that stuff you usually have
7 to ask through RACC to launch them.

8 MR. IDE: With it being an MCI, I'm sure they were auto-
9 launched.

10 MS. HARLEY: Did anybody tell any of you anything about there
11 being any injuries on the train?

12 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Once all the different municipalities came
13 together, they actually did an EMS crew, I think Justin was
14 included in it.

15 MR. IDE: No.

16 MR. SCHMERTZLER: You weren't? I thought you were.

17 Mr. IDE: No, I didn't get on the train.

18 MR. SCHMERTZLER: They went down through the train and were
19 checking people. I think we did bring two people off the train.

20 MR. IDE: I arrived on Engine 52 but I left because I had,
21 being a volunteer, I had a passport appointment at 1:30, so I was
22 only on scene for about an hour and then I left. I talked to the
23 chief and said, "Hey, I got to do this, my wife will kill me if I
24 miss this passport appointment." And I hitched a ride with a
25 detective from Albemarle County PD back to the station and went to

1 my passport appointment in Charlottesville.

2 MS. HARLEY: Did you make it?

3 MR. IDE: Oh, yeah, I did.

4 Mr. RICH: You're going to the wrong place. You need to go
5 to Waynesboro. You just walk right in there.

6 MR. IDE: Yeah?

7 MR. RICH: Yeah.

8 MR. IDE: In Charlottesville you got to just, I don't know,
9 we just looked up --

10 MR. RICH: But anyway?

11 MR. IDE: Yeah, but anyway I made it and then, but yes, I was
12 on the scene for about an hour and then I left.

13 MS. HARLEY: When you guys were there, was the train running?
14 Did you hear the locomotives?

15 MR. IDE: Yes.

16 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I could hear it, I thought I heard it.

17 MR. IDE: Yeah, I know I heard it. You don't think you heard
18 it? I'm pretty sure it was running.

19 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I know they fired it back up. Because the
20 train was off at one point. Then they started the train back up.

21 MR. RICH: Yeah, I think the rear locomotive was off when we
22 got there.

23 MR. SCHMERTZLER: That's the only thing I can go by is the
24 rear locomotive. It was off when we got there.

25 MR. IDE: Yeah, I didn't even see the front locomotive. I

1 never even went up there.

2 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, I didn't either.

3 MR. IDE: I asked about the people on the train. We were
4 told initially that there was nothing, that there were no major
5 injuries or anything. And obviously the priority was with the guy
6 on the ground. But then as Will said, once people started showing
7 up, they designated a team of people. I think they were guys from
8 15.

9 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, I think so.

10 MR. IDE: Which is Ablemarle.

11 MR. SCHMERTZLER: That would have been the IVY Station.

12 MR. IDE: IVY Fire Rescue. I think once they arrived John
13 James, who is the captain on that rig, established that they
14 needed to walk the train and talk to people. But then at that
15 point, I left.

16 MS. HARLEY: Could you see into the train, the train cars?

17 MR. IDE: No.

18 MR. SCHMERTZLER: You could. I could see into the train cars
19 and once they started moving the train up to let the two people
20 off that we took off the train, [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]

22 [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED]

24 [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 MS. HARLEY: Is there anything you think I should have asked
 12 you and I failed to ask you?

13 Mr. SCHMERTZLER: No, I can't think of anything.

14 MR. RICH: Sure I can't think of anything.

15 MR. IDE: The only thing, can I ask you?

16 MS. HARLEY: Sure.

17 MR. SCHMERTZLER: of course, at the scene to me, as big as it
 18 was, it went pretty well yesterday considering --

19 MR. IDE: Everything that happened.

20 MR. SCHMERTZLER: But the only thing that I saw that, and I
 21 don't know how you change this because that's my, that's not what
 22 I do, but, you've got so many people out there. [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED]

24 [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED]

1	[Redacted]
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[REDACTED]

MR. IDE: The pictures I took after, I only started taking pictures after the critical care was taken care of and I have 35 pictures or something. [REDACTED]

MS. HARLEY: A couple of things then. Did any of the train crew talk to anybody?

Mr. IDE: No.

MR. SCHMERTZLER: No, not to me.

MR. IDE: Not to me.

MR. RICH: No, ma'am.

MS. HARLEY: Did you see any of the train crew?

MR. RICH: I did.

MR. IDE: I saw this guy that looked like Zach Brown (ph.) that was up there looking like he was -- when I looked I thought he was in the door of the engine.

MR. SCHMERTZLER: The guy was driving the back of the engine.

MR. IDE: Was that, he had this big beard and he looked like Zach Brown and I was like, "Dude, what is Zach Brown doing here?"

1 But I didn't see anything that identified him as a train crew or
2 whatever.

3 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Yeah, I would say I saw three people off
4 the train, they were all dressed in black, like a conductor -- not
5 a conductor but whatever they call the train person, or whatever.
6 There was three of them. There was two men and a lady that I saw.

7 MS. HARLEY: Are you guys going to do an after action on this
8 in (indiscernible)?

9 MR. IDE: I'm sure.

10 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I think we probably are.

11 MR. IDE: I'm sure we will.

12 MR. RICH: Yes, ma'am.

13 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I think in all, I think it'll get involved
14 Albemarle County, Charlottesville City, everybody that was
15 involved and they'll come up with a date for us to get together
16 and do an Action Review.

17 MS. HARLEY: What happens here is after we talk to everyone
18 then we sit down and we say, "All right, was there anything that
19 could have possibly have changed?" Truthfully, the dead are dead
20 and injured are injured. Truthfully, it's just the dynamics of
21 the crash that really doesn't have a lot do to with you.

22 So the next question is, did you encounter anything that
23 adversely affected your job or made your job a little more
24 difficult than necessary? I would say probably not but I don't
25 know, we're still interviewing people but one of the things that

1 I've seen and one of the things I think would greatly enhance your
2 job is that you guys get some hands-on experience with dealing
3 with trains.

4 And certainly, you need to know that if someone calls up and
5 says, "There's someone stuck on a railroad crossing," that you
6 know that there's a big giant sign there that will put you
7 directly to the dispatcher who can immediately stop a train. That
8 way you don't have to funnel through 10,000 people trying to get
9 to the right number. That is something that we believe everyone
10 should have -- not just first responders, but everybody in the
11 area should know what to do if something happens on a train and a
12 train crossing.

13 Those are things that you guys are lucky, you have someone
14 who's a former Amtrak employee who's going to help out. I'm going
15 to send the DVDs down. I mean, they're really good. They were
16 actually made by someone who was in a fire department, in the
17 police department who also happens to work for the Federal
18 Railroad and understands what you need to know to do your job.
19 So, I certainly will be able to do that.

20 Outside of that, basically, at this particular point we're
21 just looking at the hows and whys it occurred. Truthfully,
22 there's nothing you're going to be able to do to prevent someone
23 being killed if they're hit by a train. You've got 10 million
24 pounds of train against 50,000 pounds of truck.

25 MR. IDE: That's why they say feel like you've been hit by a

1 train. I only know exactly what it's like.

2 MR. SCHMERTZLER: The only one thing that I can remember that
3 I think you picked up on it, too, is we were standing there and
4 looking down on the ground, we picked up the Time Disposal
5 schedule. They had a schedule of every house, every stop that
6 they were making. In my heart and in my head, this is my
7 assumption only, is that this guy was behind and he was trying to
8 make up time. Why would they carry that schedule like that?

9 MR. RICH: Like I was telling you all, when I was here at the
10 firehouse, I happen to see a Time Disposal truck --

11 MR. SCHMERTZLER: It was that guy.

12 MR. RICH: -- Yeah, go around the fire department, I guess
13 like he was turning around or something.

14 MR. SCHMERTZLER: But I just thought that was kind of odd.
15 Hopefully, they're not pushing those guys to be "Here's this time
16 and you got to get there no matter what." Because, in my mind, he
17 was behind and he said I'm going around this track. I got to make
18 my time.

19 MR. IDE: Hate to say it, time is money. Time is money and I
20 tell you, at our house, we have -- we live in a development down
21 the toad here and they do our trash. Man, I tell you, there at
22 7:15 every Monday morning they're there. They are on target 7:15
23 every morning.

24 MS. HARLEY: So you saw that Time Disposal truck?

25 MR. RICH: Yeah, it drove around the parking lot and it was

1 probably, I would say probably about --

2 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Could have been five minutes before it
3 happened.

4 MR. RICH: Yeah, about five minutes before it happened.

5 MS. HARLEY: Did you see the police officer?

6 MR. RICH: Yes, he actually came in and spoke to me. What
7 was his name? Comes in all the time, runs with (indiscernible).

8 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Ken?

9 MR. RICH: Kind of got a mustache.

10 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Not Dennis.

11 MR. IDE: Dennis Hahn (ph.)?

12 MR. Rich: Can't remember his name.

13 MS. HARLEY: Out of curiosity, do you guys have either body
14 worn cameras or helmet cameras?

15 MR. SCHMERTZLER: No, ma'am.

16 MR. IDE: We have cameras here at the department though.

17 MS. HARLEY: You do have cameras?

18 MR. SCHMERTZLER: If they're working.

19 MR. IDE: If they're working.

20 MR. SCHMERTZLER: When they changed over to Comcast they said
21 it messed up the cameras. I don't know whether they got them
22 back in service.

23 MR. IDE: You might want to check with the chief. They
24 should have cameras on every corner.

25 MR. RICH: We got cameras on the back and kind of up front.

1 It's just the one over there and one over here that's outside.

2 MR. IDE: But who knows if they're working?

3 MS. HARLEY: Is there someone here that can tell me about
4 whether those cameras are actually functioning now?

5 MR. RICH: Mike Boyle is --

6 MR. IDE: Mike Boyle would be the person, he's the chief.

7 MS. HARLEY: I was just curious, I was just seeing if we
8 could see the time and to verify that that was the truck that
9 actually came through.

10 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Give him a call and see if he can tell us
11 yeah or nay on that. Somebody just said that to me the other day
12 when they changed over our internet and so with our key fobs to
13 get in and with the service on the cameras, also.

14 MR. RICH: I can't remember when Mike was saying it because I
15 think you had to go on line officers meeting. I think when it
16 switched over, it's just he couldn't access them or something? I
17 don't remember what it was now.

18 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Is the speed down through here for Amtrak
19 60? Is the speed 60 miles an hour for Amtrak coming through here?

20 MS. HARLEY: It's faster.

21 MR. SCHMERTZLER: It's pretty quick.

22 MS. HARLEY: Passenger trains it's faster.

23 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Because we have Amtrak and we get empty
24 coal trains and that's really what runs this track right here.

25 MS. HARLEY: So usually the freight trains are a lot slower,

1 a lot slower but the passenger trains are very fast. Then they
2 get faster the farther north they go. I think at some point they
3 can actually do almost 100 miles an hour, or they're allowed to do
4 a little over 100 miles an hour.

5 Mr. SCHMERTZLER: That's pretty quick on a train.

6 MS. HARLEY: Yes, especially something that takes about a
7 mile and a half to stop.

8 MR. SCHMERTZLER: My sister got hit by a train in 1972, on
9 her 16th birthday. The train hit her side of the vehicle, it was
10 like a 1969-1970 Impala, and a young man was driving my dad's car
11 and the train hit them but back there then wasn't a lot of
12 crossing signs, wasn't arms, wasn't anything like that.

13 They hit her doing three miles an hour and it took 175 feet
14 to stop that train. She Lived, thank the Lord, but she was in a
15 body cast for 4 and 1/2 months. But like you said a minute ago,
16 the 100 million pounds of train coming at you, it can't stop on a
17 dime.

18 MS. HARLEY: By the way, you said that the crossing arms were
19 down, were the lights flashing?

20 MR. SCHMERTZLER: No, and I think that might be --

21 MR. RICH: I think they were.

22 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I don't think they were, either

23 MR. IDE: No, I didn't see lights flashing. I did see the
24 cross members down.

25 MR. RICH: It may have been also, because I think the power

1 source for those was coming from that box and that box --

2 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I'm sure that box got obliterated, too,
3 right there where it was because that was a new box, if I'm not
4 mistaken. They just put that in not long ago.

5 MR. RICH: Yeah, it was about year or so ago.

6 MS. HARLEY: Yeah, it was.

7 MR. RICH: See, my wife's family lives right there on Orchard
8 Acre. I've heard people say that sometimes that the arms have
9 come down and the lights be flashing and no train. People are
10 famous for zipping around there, especially on that one for some
11 reason.

12 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Hopefully nobody else ever will.

13 MR. IDE: Mike's coming down here. He says the cameras are
14 working. He said, "Give me a couple of minutes."

15 MS. HARLEY: That's wonderful, absolutely. I'll give him all
16 the time he needs.

17 MS. HARLEY: Outside of that crossing, are there any other
18 protective grade crossings in this area?

19 MR. RICH: No, not for us, that's it.

20 MS. HARLEY: That's it?

21 MR. RICH: Yeah.

22 MR. IDE: What's your email Sheryl?

23 MS. HARLEY: It's Sheryl, S-H-E-R-Y-L., like the motorcycle,
24 H-A-R-L-E-Y, @NTSB.gov. Yes, that's be me.

25 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I heard there were some folks taken off to

1 Charlottesville, was there other injuries on the train that nobody
2 said anything about until they got to Charlottesville, or am I
3 hearing rumors?

4 MS. HARLEY: I'm not quite sure, I know that there were
5 several minor injuries on the train. And initially they thought
6 there weren't any injuries or that people had initially refused
7 care and then later on decided to go. Where these people actually
8 got off the train, I'm not quite sure.

9 MR. IDE: Would the train have to be turned on if the lights
10 on it were on?

11 MS. HARLEY: No, trains are supposed to have an emergency
12 backup system so that in the event there's a derailment that the
13 passengers can get off, can see how to get off the train, and the
14 first responders can see how to get on the train. If we find
15 that, if for some unknown reason, that trains are dark and first
16 responders complain that they're dark, which of course complicates
17 your rescue efforts, is also a safety issue. Then that's
18 something that we deal with right away, that is something that
19 needs to be addressed.

20 There needs to be emergency lighting and there's a whole
21 regulation about that that I'm not quite sure, it's long drawn
22 out, but basically, what it says is there has to be enough light
23 for a certain amount of time to allow people to be able to get off
24 the train.

25 MR. SCHMERTZLER: I know the most thing in my mind yesterday

1 was when we got there yesterday that train was upright.

2 MS. HARLEY: So the only car that was actually, "derailed"
3 was the front locomotive. All the other train cars appear to be
4 on, actually on the track?

5 MR. SCHMERTZLER: From what I saw, my point of view, yes. I
6 didn't walk the tracks at all but from what I saw, yes. Then I
7 guess you kind of took it for granted when they unhooked from the
8 front locomotive and started moving the train back.

9 MS. HARLEY: They moved the train, did they move the train
10 all the way back past the crossing?

11 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Not starting off they didn't. They moved
12 it to the point the cars would have the injured in it. We took
13 off and then once that was done, then they moved it on past.

14 MS. HARLEY: That's basically it. It's 7:38, if anybody has
15 any last thoughts?

16 MR. IDE: No.

17 MS. HARLEY: Again, I certainly do appreciate you taking the
18 time in talking to me and I will get that stuff down to you.

19 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Thank you very much, that will be a big
20 help.

21 MS. HARLEY: In the meantime, we have spoken to the railroad
22 and they have agreed that that's something that will be coming
23 very shortly approaching you guys about getting you some training.
24 They also need to deal with some public relations, public
25 information about what to do on a crossing and how to get in touch

1 right away with the train dispatcher so they can stop those
2 trains. Okay? Awesome. Thank you.

3 MR. SCHMERTZLER: Thank you.

4 MR. IDE: Thank you very much.

5 (Whereupon, at 7:39 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION OF AMTRAK SPECIAL TRAIN
 P0923 31 AT THE HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
 CROSSING AT LANETOWN ROAD IN
 CROZET, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 2018
 Interview of Firefighters Justin Ide,
 Will Schmertzler, and Rodney Rich, Jr

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY18MH005

PLACE Crozet, Virginia

DATE: February 2, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Romona Phillips
Transcriber